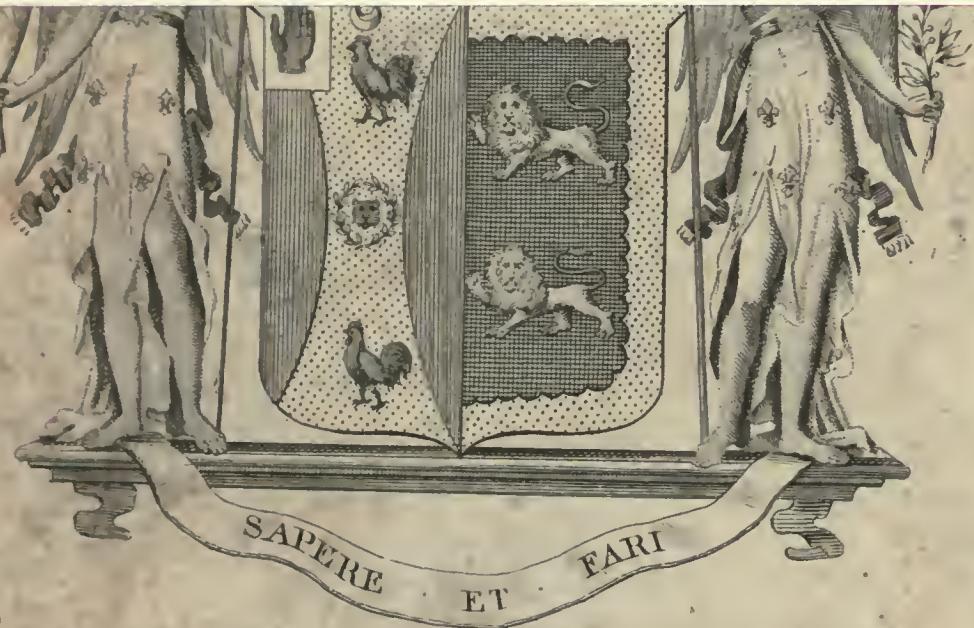




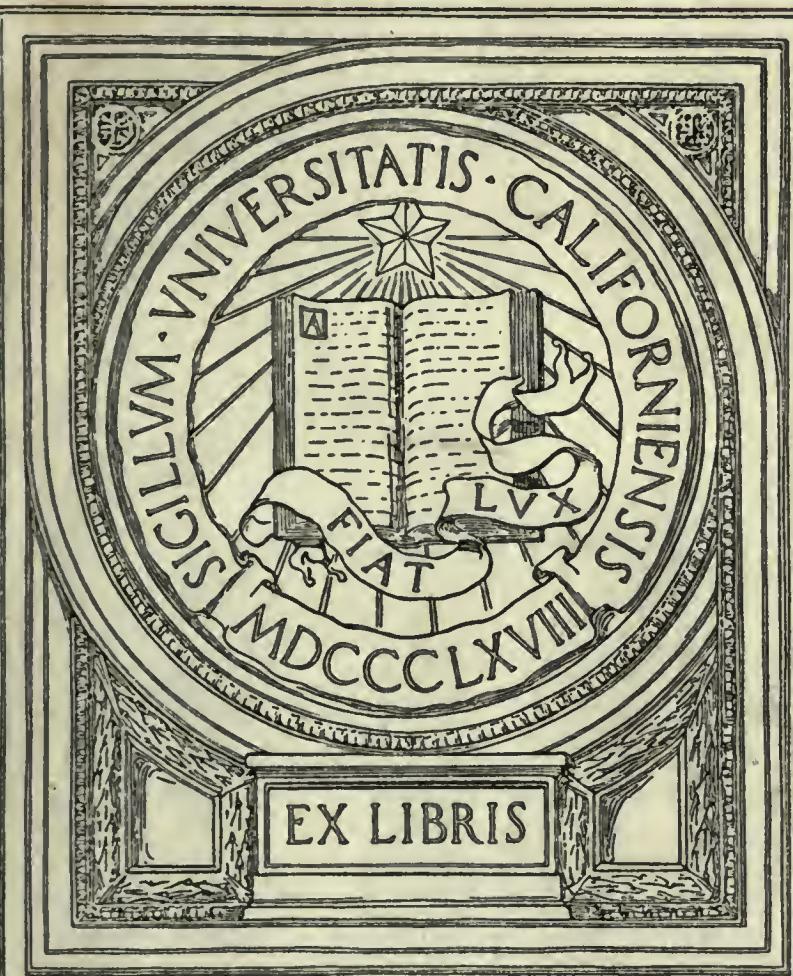
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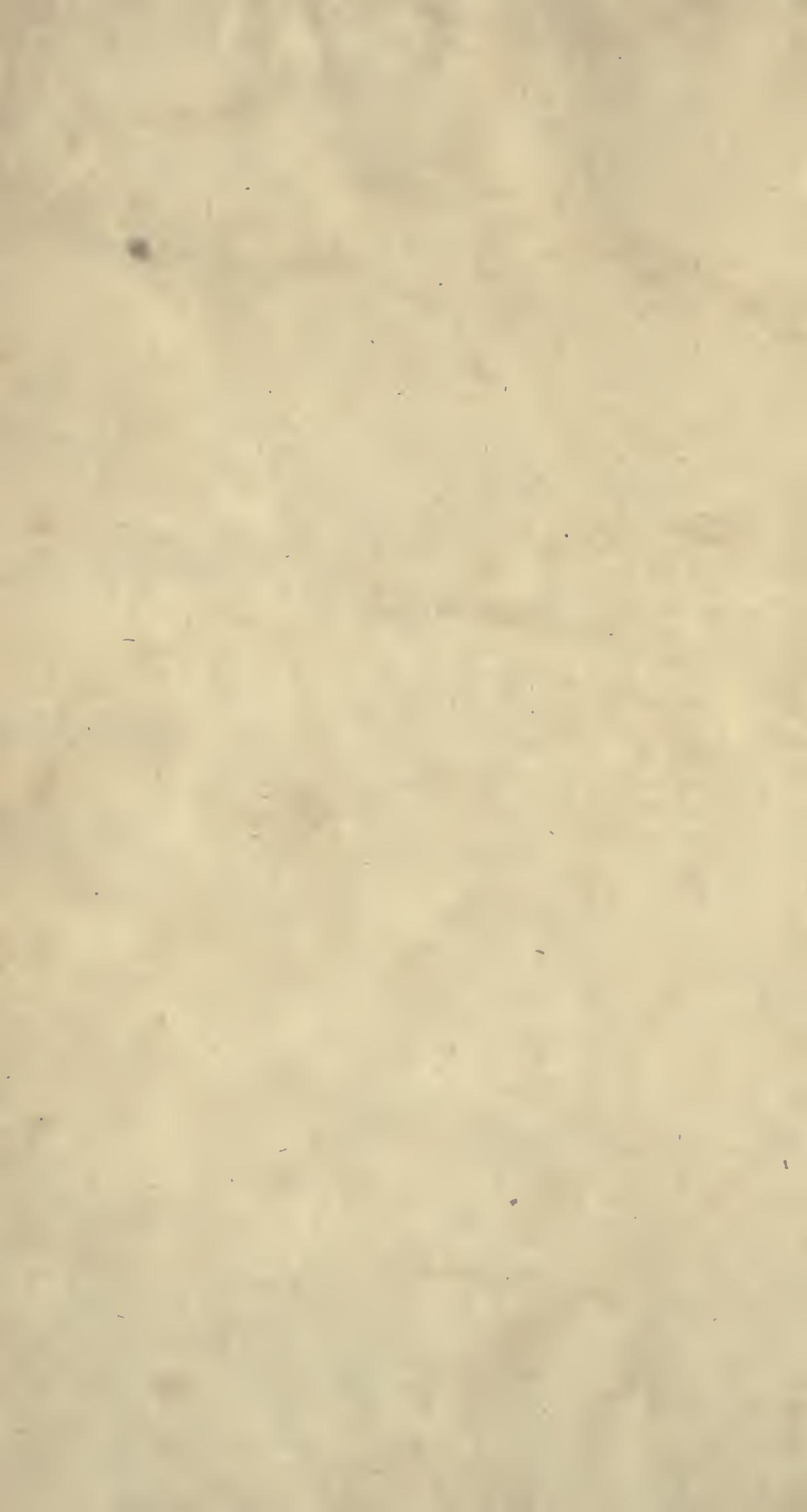


Sir Charles Cockerell Bart.

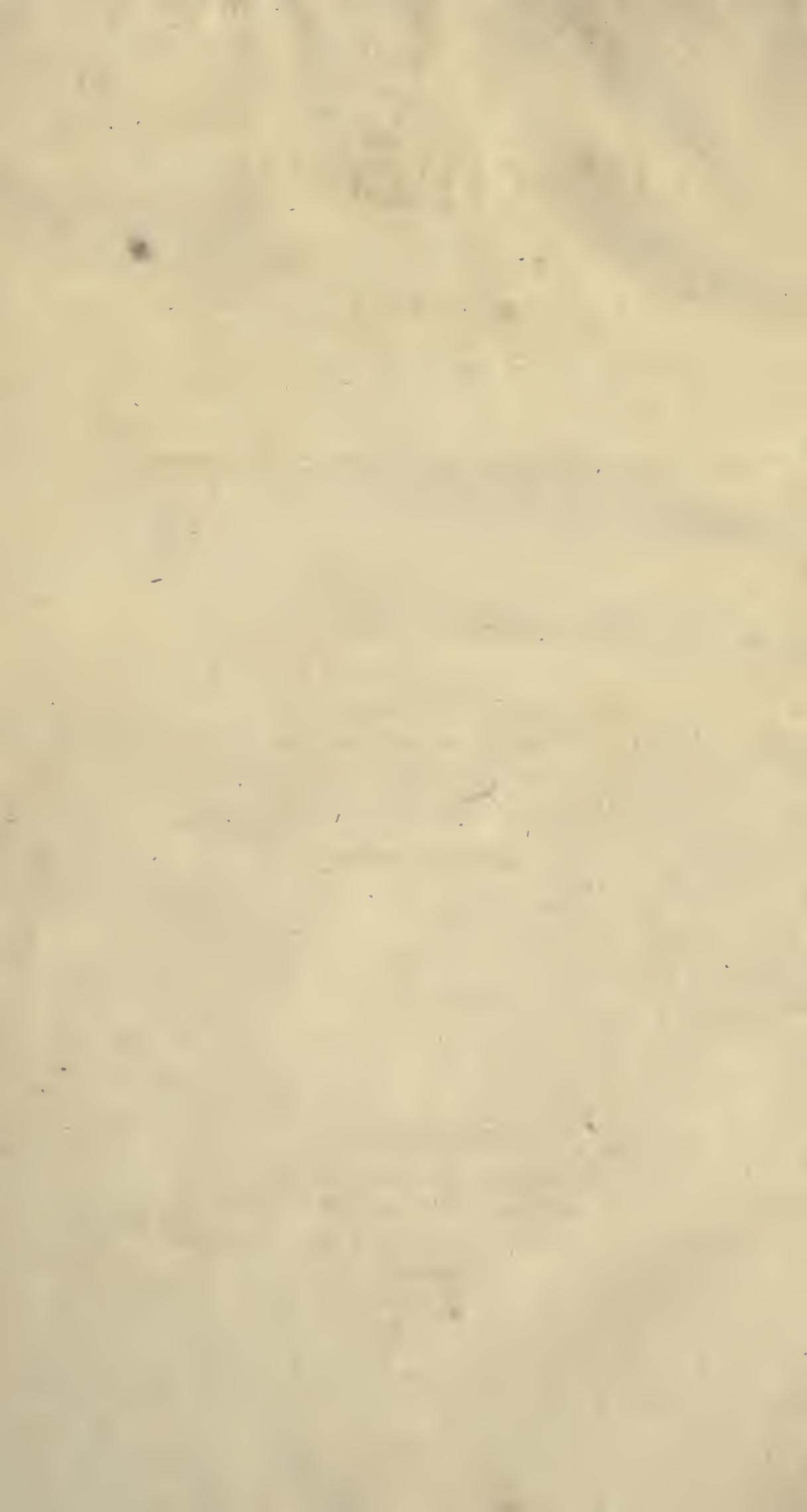


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DISCIPLINE:

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SELF-CONTROL."

All-pitying Heaven,
Severe in mercy, chastening in its love,
Ofttimes in dark and awful visitation
Doth interpose ; and leads the wanderer back
To the straight path.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

DISCIPLINE.
VOLUME II.

EDINBURGH:

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DISCIPLINE.



VOL. II.

A.

UNIVERSITY OF

CALIFORNIA

DISCIPLINE.

CHAP. XII.

— Oh my fate !

That never would consent, that I should see
How worthy thou wert both of love and duty,
Before I lost you ; —

With justice, therefore, you may cut me off,
And from your memory wash the remembrance
That ere I was ; like to some vicious purpose,
Which in your better judgment you repent of,
And study to forget.

MASSINGER.

THE morning shone bright with a summer sun. The trees, though now rich in foliage, were still varied with the fresh hues of spring. The river flashed gaily in the sunbeam ; or rolled foaming from the prows of stately vessels which now veered as in conscious grace, now moved onward as in

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power without effort, bearing wealth and plenty from distant lands. What heart, that is not chilled by misery, or hardened by guilt, is insensible to the charms of renovated nature? What human heart exults not in the tokens of human power? Mine rejoiced in the splendid scene before me; but it was the rejoicing of the proud, always akin to boasting. "How richly," I exclaimed, "has the Creator adorned this fair dwelling of his children! A glorious dwelling, worthy of the noble creatures for whom it was designed;—creatures whose courage braves the mighty ocean,—whose power compels the service of the elements,—whose wisdom scales the heavens, and unlocks the springs of a moving universe! And can there be zealots whose gloomy souls behold in this magnificent frame of things, only the scene of a dull and toilsome pilgrimage, for beings wayworn, guilty, wretched?"

In these thoughts, and others of like reasonableness and humility, I reached the dwelling of my friend. It was a low thatched cottage, standing somewhat apart from a few scattered dwellings, which scarcely de-

served the name of a village. I had seen it in my childhood, when a holiday had dismissed me from confinement, and it was associated in my mind with images of gaiety and freedom. Alas! those images but ill-accorded with its present aspect. It looked deserted and forlorn. She, by whose taste it had been adorned, was now a prisoner within its walls. The flowers which she had planted, were blooming in confused luxuriance. The rose-tree which she had taught to climb the latticed porch, now half-impeded entrance; and the jessamine which she had twined round her casement, now threw back its dishevelled sprays as if to shade her death-bed. The carriage stopped at the wicket of the neglected garden; and I, my lofty thoughts somewhat quelled by the desolateness of the scene, passed thoughtfully towards the cottage, along a walk once kept with a neatness the most precise, now faintly marked with a narrow track which alone repressed the disorderly vegetation.

The door was opened for me by Miss Mortimer's only domestic, a grave and re-

verend-looking person, with silver gray hair, combed smooth under a neat crimped coif, and with a starched white handkerchief crossed decently upon her breast. Nor were her manners less a contrast to those of the flippant gentlewomen to whose attendance I was accustomed. With abundance of ceremony, she ushered me up stairs; then passing me with a low courtesy and a few words of respectful apology, she went before me into her mistress's apartment, and announced my arrival in terms in which the familiar kindness of a friend blended oddly with the reverence of an inferior. Miss Mortimer, with an exclamation of joy, stretched her arms fondly towards me. Prepared as I was for an alteration in her appearance, I was shocked at the change which a few weeks had effected. A faint glow flushed her face for a moment, and vanished. Her eyes, that were wont to beam with such dove-like softness, now shed an ominous brilliance. The hand which she extended towards me, scarcely seemed to exclude the light, and every little vein was perceptible in its sickly tran-

sparency. Yet her wasted countenance retained its serenity ; and her feeble voice still spoke the accents of cheerfulness. " My dearest Ellen," said she, " this is so kind ! And yet I expected it too ! I knew you would come."

Blushing at praise which my tardy kindness had so ill deserved, I hastily inquired concerning her health. " I believe," said she smiling, though she sighed too, " that I am still to cumber the ground a little longer. I am told that my immediate danger is past."

" Heaven be praised," cried I, with fervent sincerity.

" God's will be done," said Miss Mortimer. " I once seemed so near my haven ! I little thought to be cast back upon the stormy ocean ; but, God's will be done."

" Nay, call it not the stormy ocean," said I. " Say rather, upon a cheerful stream, where you and I shall glide peacefully on together. You will soon be able to come to us at Richmond, and then I will shew you all the affection and all the respect which"—" I ought always to have

shewn," were the words which rose to my lips; but pride stifled the accents of confession. "Were you once able," continued I, "to taste the blessed air that stirs all living things so joyously to-day, and see how all earth and heaven are gladdened with this glorious sunshine, you would gain new life and vigour every moment."

"Ay he is shining brightly," said Miss Mortimer, looking towards her darkened casement. "And a better sun too is gladdening all earth and heaven; but I, confined in a low cottage, see only the faint reflection of His brightness. But I know that He is shining gloriously," continued she, the flush of rapture mounting to her face, "and I shall yet see Him and rejoice."

I made no reply. "It is fortunate," thought I, "that they who have no pleasure in this life, can solace themselves with the prospect of another." Little did I at that moment imagine, that I myself was destined to furnish proof, that the loss of all worldly comfort cannot of itself procure this solace; that the ruin of all our earthly prospects

cannot of itself elevate the hope long used to grovel among earthly things.

I spent almost two hours with my friend ; during which, though so weak that the slightest exertions seemed oppressive to her, she at intervals conversed cheerfully. She inquired with friendly interest into my employments and recreations ; but she knew me too well to hazard more direct interro-
gation concerning the effect of her monito-
ry letter. In the course of our conversation, she asked, whether I often saw Mr Mait-
land ? The question was a very simple one ; but my roused watchfulness upon that sub-
ject made me fancy something particular in her manner of asking it. It had occur-
red to me, that she might possibly be able to solve the difficulty which had of late so much perplexed me ; but I could not pre-
vail upon myself to state the case directly. “ I wonder,” said I, “ now that you are gone, what can induce Maitland to visit us so often ? ” I thought there was meaning in Miss Mortimer’s smile ; but her reply was prevented by the entrance of the maid with refreshments. I wished Barbara a thousand

miles off with her tray, though it contained rich wines, and some of the most costly fruits of the season. Miss Mortimer pressed me to partake of them, telling me, that she was regularly and profusely supplied. "The giver," said she, "withholds nothing except his name; and that too I believe I can guess."

A gentle knock at the house-door now drew Barbara from the room, and I instantly began to contrive how I might revert to the subject of my curiosity. "Could you have imagined," said I, "that my father was the kind of man likely to attract Maitland so much?"

My enemy again made her appearance. "Mr Maitland is below, Madam," said she, "I asked him in, because I thought you would not turn his worthy worship away the third time he is come to ask for you."

"Well, Ellen," said Miss Mortimer smiling, "as your presence may protect my character, I think I may see him to-day."

As Mr Maitland entered the room, I saw my friend make a feeble effort to rise from her seat; and, bending towards her, I sup-

ported her in my arms. The moment Maitland's eye fell upon me it lightened with satisfaction. After speaking to my friend he turned to me. "Miss Percy!" said he; and he said no more; but I would not have exchanged these words, and the look which accompanied them, for all the compliments of all mankind. Yet at that moment the spirit of coquetry slept; for I quite forgot to calculate upon his love, and thought only of his approbation.

I believe neither Maitland nor I recollect that he still held the hand he had taken, till Miss Mortimer offered him some fruit, hinting that she suspected him of having a peculiar right to it. A slight change of colour betrayed him, but he only answered carelessly, that fruit came seasonably after a walk of seven miles in a sultry day. "You never travel otherwise than on foot on Sunday;" said Miss Mortimer. "I seldom find occasion to travel on Sunday at all," answered Maitland; "but I knew that I could spend an hour with you without violating the spirit of the fourth commandment."

The hour was spent, and spent without weariness even to me ; yet I cannot recollect that a single sentence was uttered in reference to worldly business or amusement ; except that Maitland once bitterly lamented his disappointed hopes of usefulness to the African cause. " However," added he, " I believe I had need of that lesson. Our master is the only one whose servants venture to be displeased if they may not direct what service he will accept from them."

" Nobody is more in want of such a lesson than I," said Miss Mortimer, " when my foolish heart is tempted to repine at the prospect of being thus laid aside, perhaps for years ; useless as it should seem to myself and to all human kind."

" My good friend," returned Maitland, (and a tear for a moment quenched the lightning of that eye before which the most untameable spirit must have bowed submissive,) " say not that you are useless, while you can shew forth the praise of your Creator. His goodness shines gloriously when he bestows and blesses the gifts of nature

and of fortune ; but more gloriously when his mercy gladdens life after all these gifts are withdrawn. It is the high privilege of your condition to prove that our Father is of himself alone sufficient for the happiness of his children."

" I am sure my friend," cried I, " of all people upon earth, you need the least regret, being made idle for a little while ; for the recollection of the good which you have already done must furnish your mind with a continual feast."

" Indeed, Ellen," returned Miss Mortimer, " you never were more mistaken. I do not recollect one action of my life, not even of those which originated in a sense of duty, that has not been degraded by some mixture of evil, either in the motive or in the performance."

" Oh but you know perfection is not expected from us."

Maitland shook his head. " I fear," said he, " we must not trust much to your plea, so long as we are commanded to ' be perfect.' Miss Mortimer will feel at peace, not because she hopes that her King will,

instead of her just tribute, accept of counters; but because she knows that the full tribute has been paid."

While I saw the truths of religion affect the vigorous mind of Maitland,—while I saw them triumph in a feebler soul over pain, and loneliness, and fear,—how could I remain wholly insensible to their power?—whilst I listened to the conversation of these Christians, how could I suppress a wish that their comforts might one day be mine? "Pray for me," I whispered to Miss Mortimer, half-desirous half-afraid to extend my petition to Maitland, "pray for me that, when I am sick and dying, your God may bless me as he now blesses you." I know not how my friend replied; for Maitland laid his hand upon my head, with a look in which all kind and holy feeling was so blended, that raptured saints can image nothing more seraphic. He spoke not—but the language of man is feeble to the eloquence of that pause.

But my mind was as yet unfit to retain any serious impression. The voice of truth played over it as the breeze upon the un-

stable waters, moving it gently for a moment and then passing away. My religious humour vanished with the scene by which it was excited ; and even Miss Mortimer's parting whisper helped to replace it by a far different spirit. "I can guess now," said she, "what carries Mr Maitland so often to Bloomsbury Square." Before hearing this remark, I had offered to convey Maitland to town in my carriage ; and now the heart which had so lately swelled with better feelings, beat with a little coquettish fluttering, when, having taken leave of my friend, I found myself seated tête-à-tête with my supposed admirer. Maitland was, however, the very innocent cause of my flutterings, since for a whole mile he talked of Miss Mortimer, and nothing but Miss Mortimer ; then, perceiving that I was little inclined to answer, he was silent, and left me to my reflections.

The softness of evening was beginning to mingle with the cheerfulness of day, and a fresher breeze began to lighten the sultry air. "What an Arcadian day !" cried I,

“Pity that you and I were not lovers, to enjoy it thus alone together !”

I meant to utter this with the prettiest air of simplicity imaginable, but found it quite impossible to suppress the conscious glow that stole over my face. I was certain that Maitland coloured too, though he answered with great self-possession. “I make no pretensions to the character of a lover,” said he; “but you may allow me to converse with you like a friend, which will do as well.”

“Oh the very worst substitute in nature,” cried I; “for the conversation of lovers is all complaisance; whereas I find that those who beg leave to talk like friends, always mean to ask something which I do not wish to tell, or to tell something which I do not wish to hear.”

“Perhaps I may mean to do both,” said Maitland; “for there is a question which I have often wished to ask you, and when you have answered, I may perhaps undertake the other office too. Are you aware that common report joins your name with that of Lord Frederick de Burgh?”

“Stop!” cried I; “positively you must not be my confessor.”

“That must be as you please,” returned Maitland. “Then I will in charity suppose you ignorant; and when I tell you that every gossip’s tongue is busy with his good fortune, I think you will grant him no additional triumph,—unless indeed it be possible that —.” He paused, and then added with unusual warmth,—“but I will not think of such profanation, much less utter it.”

“Now, do Mr Maitland desist, I intreat you,” cried I, half smiling, half in earnest, “for I never was lectured in my life without being guilty of some impertinence; and there is nobody living whom I would not rather offend than you.”

“I believe I must venture,” returned Maitland, looking at me with a good-humoured smile. “I would hazard much for your advantage.”

“Nay, positively you shall not,” said I, playfully laying my hand upon his mouth.

This gesture, which, I protest, originated in mere thoughtlessness, ended in utter

confusion ; for Maitland, seizing my hand, pressed it to his lips. The whole affair was transacted in far less time than I can tell it ; and we both sat looking, I believe, abundantly silly, though neither I fancy had the courage to take a view of the other. The silence was first broken by a splenetic ejaculation from Maitland. “ Pshaw,” said he, “ you will compel me to act the puppy in spite of myself.” Now, whatever colour Maitland might try to throw upon his inadvertence, I plainly perceived that it had not originated in a cool sense of the duty of gallantry ; for he was even studiously inattentive to all the common gallantries which I was accustomed to expect from others. My breast swelled with the pride of victory ; and yet my situation was embarrassing enough ; for Maitland, far from confirming my dreams of conquest, much more from empowering me to pursue my triumph, maintained a frozen silence, and seemed wrapt in a very unloverlike meditation.

The first words which he uttered were these : “ Although Parliament refuses jus-

tice to these Africans, much might be done for those already in slavery. Much might be done by a person residing among them, determined to own no interest but their welfare." I could not at that time follow the chain which had led to this idea. Unfortunately for me, I was soon enabled to trace the connection.

As soon as we entered the town, Maitland expressed a wish to alight, and immediately took a cold and formal leave. I returned home, with every thought full of my new discovery,—every affection absorbed in vanity. Convinced of Maitland's attachment, I now only wondered why it was not avowed. The most probable conjecture I could form was, that he wished to save his pride the pain of a repulse; and again I piously resolved to spare no torture within my power. I was determined that, cost what it would, the secret should be explicitly told; after which I should of course be entitled to exhibit and sport with my captive at pleasure. Beyond this mean and silly triumph I looked not. I forgot that the lion, even when tamed, will not

learn the tricks of a monkey. Weaker souls, I knew, might be led contented in their silken fetters;—I forgot that the strongest cords bound Sampson only whilst he slept. To reward the expected patience of my lover was not in all my thoughts. I should as soon have dreamt of marrying my father.

Meanwhile Maitland was in no haste to renew my opportunities of coquetting. Business, or, as I then thought, the fear of committing himself, kept him a whole week from visiting us. During that week, I had canvassed the subject with Miss Arnold under every possible aspect, except those in which it would have appeared to a rational mind. I believe my friend began to be, as perhaps the reader is, heartily tired of my confidence. She certainly wished the occasion of our discussion at an end, but she had no desire that it should end favourably to my wishes. She dreaded the increase of Maitland's influence. A mutual dislike indeed subsisted between them. He seemed to have an intuitive perception of the dark side of her character, and she

to feel a revolting awe of his undceiving, undeceivable sagacity. I have often seen the artful, though they despise defenceless simplicity, and delight to exert their skill against weapons like their own, yet shrink with instinctive dread from plain undesigning common sense. Maitland's presence always imposed a visible restraint upon Miss Arnold. But she had more cogent reasons than her dislike of Maitland for wishing to arrest the progress of an intercourse which threatened to baffle certain schemes of her own. Meaning to interrupt our good understanding, she gave me the advice which appeared most likely to effect her purpose. Of this I have now no doubt, though, at that time, I harboured not a suspicion of any motive less friendly than a desire to forward every purpose of mine.

“If you don't flirt more sentimentally,” said she, “you will never make any impression upon Maitland. He knows you would never rattle away as you do to De Burgh, with any man you really cared for. You should endeavour to seem in earnest.”

“ Oh, I am quite tired of endeavouring to seem. And then I really can’t be sentimental. It is not in my nature. Besides, it would be all in vain. Maitland has found out that I am not in love with Lord Frederick ; and it will be impossible to convince him of the contrary.”

“ No matter,—you may make him believe that you are some how bound in honour to Lord Frederick, which will quite answer the purpose.”

“ No, Juliet, that I cannot possibly do, without downright falsehood.”

“ Oh, I’ll engage to make him believe it without telling him one word of untruth. Let me manage the matter, and I’ll make him as jealous as a very Osmyn,—that is, provided he be actually in love.”

The scepticism of my friend upon this point was a continual source of irritation to me ; and, to own the truth, furnished one great cause of my eagerness to ascertain my conquest beyond cavil. “ Well !” returned I, already beginning to yield, “ if you could accomplish it honourably—but—no—I should not like to be thought

weak enough to entangle myself with a man for whom I had no particular attachment."

"I am certain," returned Miss Arnold more gravely, "that if Mr Maitland thought your honour concerned, far from considering the fulfilment of even a tacit engagement as a weakness, he would highly admire you for the sacrifice."

The prospect of being "highly admired" by Mr Maitland, blinded me to the sophistry of this answer,—yet I felt myself unwilling that he should actually believe me to be under engagement, and I expressed that unwillingness to my adviser. "Oh!" cried she, "we must guard against making him too sure. I would merely hint the thing, as what I feared might happen, and leave you an opening to deny or explain at any time. As I live! there he comes, just at the lucky moment. Now, leave him to me for half an hour, and I will engage to bring him to confession,—that is, if he has any thing to confess."

"Well! I should like to see you con-

vinced for once, if it be possible to convince you ; and yet, what if he should —.”

“ Oh there’s his knock,” interrupted Juliet. “ If we stand here objecting, we shall lose the opportunity. Sure you can trust to my management.”

“ Well Juliet,” said I, with a prophetic sigh, “ do as you please, but, for heaven’s sake, be cautious.” She instantly accepted the permission ; and flew down stairs to receive him in the parlour.

Let no woman retain in her confidence the treacherous ally who once persuades or assists her to depart from the plain path of simplicity. Such an ally, whatever partial fondness may allege, must be deficient either in understanding or in integrity. That the associate who incites you to deceive others will in time deceive yourself, is the least evil to be apprehended from such a connection. The young are notoriously liable to the guidance of their intimates, and most women are, in this respect, young all their lives. If I had naturally any good tendency, it was towards sincerity ; and yet a false friend working on my ruling passion, had

led me to the brink of actual deceit. So stable are the virtues which are founded only in constitution or humour ! Had I been wisely unrelenting to the first artifice of pretended friendship; and honestly abhorrent even of the wile which professed to favour me, the bitterest misfortunes of my life might have been spared, and I might have escaped from sufferings never to be forgotten,—from errors never to be cancelled.

My punishment began even during the moments of Miss Arnold's conference with Maitland. I was restless and agitated. My heart throbbed violently, less with the hopes of triumph than with the anxiousness of duplicity, and the dread of detection. I trembled; I breathed painfully; at every noise I started, thinking it betokened the close of the conference, which yet seemed endless. Again and again I approached the parlour door, and as often retreated, fearing to spoil all by a premature interruption. I was once more resolving to join my friend, when I heard some one leave the house. I flew to a

window ; and saw Maitland walk swiftly along the square, and disappear, without once looking back. This seemed ominous ; but, as my friend did not come to make her report, I went in search of her.

I found her in an attitude of meditation ; and though she instantly advanced towards me with a smile, her countenance bore traces of discomposure. " Well, I protest," cried she, " there is no dealing with these men without a little management."

This sounded somewhat like a boast ; and, my spirits reviving, I inquired " how her management had succeeded ?"

" You shall judge," returned Miss Arnold. " I will tell you all exactly and candidly." People seldom vouch for the candour of their narratives when it is above suspicion. " I could not be abrupt, you know," proceeded my *candid* narrator, " but I contrived to lead dexterously towards the point ; and, after smoothing my way a little, just hinted a possibility that Lord Frederick might succeed. Signor Maestoso took not the least notice. Then I grew a little more explicit. Still without effect. He

only fixed his staring black eyes upon me, as if he would have looked through me, to see what was my purpose in telling him all that. At last, I was obliged to say downrightly (Heaven forgive me for the fib), that I was afraid you might marry De Burgh at last, though I owned you had no serious regard for him. All this while Don Pompous had been walking about the room ; but at this, he stopped short just opposite to me, and asked me, with a frown as dark as a thunder cloud, “ what reason I had to say so.” “ I—I declare, I was quite frightened.”

Miss Arnold stopped and seemed to hesitate. “ Well ! Go on !” cried I impatiently. “ You know,” continued she, “ I could not answer his question in any other way, except by giving him some little instances of your—your good understanding with De Burgh ; but still I could extort no answer from the impenetrable creature, except now and then a kind of grunt.”

“ How tedious you are ! Do proceed.”

“ Atlast, when I found nothing else would do, I—I was obliged to have recourse to—

to an expedient, which produced an immediate effect ; and now Ellen, I am convinced that Maitland loves you to distraction."

"Indeed ! What ? How ?"

"Ah Ellen ! you have a thousand times more penetration than I. I would give the world for your faculty of reading the heart."

"But, dear Juliet ! how was it,—how did you discover — ?"

"Why, when nothing else seemed likely to avail, I—I thought I might venture to hint, just by way of a trifling instance of your intimacy with Lord Frederick, that—that you had—had borrowed a small sum from him."

"Good heaven, Juliet ! did you tell Maitland this ? Oh ! he will despise me for ever. Leave me,—treacherous,—you have undone me."

"Ellen, my dearest Ellen," said my friend, caressing me with the most humble affection, "I own I was very wrong ; but indeed—indeed, if you had seen how he was affected, you would have been con-

vinced, that nothing else could have been so effectual. If you had seen how pale he grew, and how he trembled, and gasped for breath. You never saw a man in such agitation. Dear Ellen, forgive me! You know I could have no motive except to serve you."

In spite of my vexation, I was not insensible to this statement, to which my vanity gave full credit; though the slightest comparison of the circumstances with the character of Maitland, must have convinced me that they were exaggerated. At length, curiosity so far prevailed over my wrath, that I condescended to inquire what answer he had given to Miss Arnold's information? Miss Arnold replied, that the first words which he was able to utter, announced, that he must see me instantly. "And why then," I asked, "is he gone in such haste?"

My friend made me repeat this question before she could hear it;—an expedient which often serves those whose answer is not quite ready. "Because he—he after-

wards changed his mind, and said he would call upon you in an hour."

Before the hour had elapsed, my resentment had yielded partly to my friend's representations, partly to a new subject of alarm. I dreaded lest, if Maitland considered my debt to Lord Frederick in so serious a light, he might think it a duty of friendship to apprise my father of my involvement; and, anxious to secure his secrecy, yet too proud to beg it, I suffered him, at his return, to be admitted to my dressing-room, although I had never before been so unwilling to encounter him. Maitland, on his part, seemed little less embarrassed than myself. He began to speak, but his words were inarticulate. He cleared his throat, and seized my attention by a look full of meaning; and the effort ended in some insignificant inquiry, to the answer of which he was evidently insensible. At last, suddenly laying his hand upon my arm, "Miss Percy," said he, "pardon my abruptness,—I really can neither think nor talk of trifles at this moment. Let me speak plainly to you. Allow me for once the

privilege of a friend. You cannot have one more sincere than myself; nor," added he with a deep sigh, "one more disinterested."

"Well!" returned I, moved by the kindness of his voice and manner, and willing to shake off my embarrassment, "use the privilege generously, and I dont care if, for once, I grant it you."

Maitland instantly, without compliment or apology, availed himself of my concession. "I presume," said he, "that Miss Arnold has acquainted you with her very strange communication to me this morning." I only bowed in answer, and did not venture again to raise my head. "Did she tell you too," proceeded Maitland, in the tone of strong indignation, "that she meant to conceal from you this most unprovoked act of treachery, had I not insisted upon warning you against a confident who could betray your secret,—and such a secret!"

Abashed and humbled, conscious that since my friend had been partly licensed by myself, she was less blameable than she appeared, yet unable, without exposing my-

self still farther, to state what little could be alleged in her vindication, I stammered out a few words, implying, that perhaps Miss Arnold did not affix any importance to the secret.

“ The inferences she drew,” cried Maitland, “ leave no doubt, that she thought it important ; or, granting it were as you say, is the woman fit to be a friend, who could regard such a transaction as immaterial ? Is there any real friend to whom you could confide it without reluctance ? I need not ask if you have entrusted it to your father.”

The tears of mortification and resentment which had been collected in my eyes while Maitland spoke, burst from them when I attempted to answer. But my wounded pride quickly came to my assistance. “ No Sir,” returned I ; “ but if you think your own reproofs insufficient, you will of course aid them with my father’s.”

Maitland could not resist the sight of my uneasiness. His countenance expressed the most gentle compassion, and his voice softened even to tenderness. “ And is the re-

proof of a father," said he, "more formidable to you than all that your delicacy must suffer under obligation to a confident admirer? Dearest Miss Percy, as a friend—a most attached, most anxious friend—I beseech you to ——"

He stopped short, and coloured very deeply,—suddenly aware, I believe, that he was speaking with a warmth which friendship seldom assumes; then taking refuge in a double intrenchment of formality, he begged me to pardon a freedom which he ascribed to his friendship for my father and Miss Mortimer. In spite of my mortifying situation, my heart bounded with triumph as I traced through this disguise the proofs of my power over the affections of Maitland. Recovering my spirits, I told him frankly, that I was determined to make no application to my father, since a few weeks would enable me to escape from my difficulty without the hazard of incensing him. Maitland looked distressed, but made no further attempt to persuade me. "This is what I feared," said he; "but I am sensible that I have no right to urge you."

He was silent for some moments, and seemed labouring with something which he knew not how to utter. A certain tremor began to steal over me too; and expectation made my breath come short when I again heard his voice. "There may be an impropriety," he began, but again he stopped embarrassed. "There may be objections against you—your condescension to Lord Frederick, which do not apply to all your acquaintance;—and—and I have taken the liberty to—to bring a few hundred pounds in case you would do me the honour to——" The manly brown of Maitland's cheek flushed with a warmer tint as he spoke; and the eye which had so often awed my turbulent spirit, now sunk timidly before mine; for he was conferring an obligation, and his generous heart entered by sympathy into the situation of one compelled to accept a pecuniary favour. But I was teased and disappointed; for here was nothing of the expected declaration; on the contrary, Maitland had wilfully marked the difference between himself and a lover.

He probably read vexation in my face,

though he ascribed it to a wrong cause. “I see,” said he in a tone of mortification, “that this is a degree of confidence which I must not expect. Perhaps you will suffer me to mention the matter to Miss Mortimer—she I am sure will allow me to be her banker for any sum you may require.”

Shame on the heartless being who could see in this delicate kindness only a triumph for the most despicable vanity! In vain did Maitland veil his interest under the semblance of friendship. Seeing, and glorying to see, that passion lurked under the disguise, I could not restrain my impatience to force the mask away. I thanked Maitland, but told him that the delay of a few weeks could be of little importance; adding, gaily, that I fancied Lord Frederick was in no haste for payment; and would prefer the right of a creditor over the liberty of his debtor.

Maitland almost shuddered. “Can you jest upon such a subject!” said he. The expression of uneasiness which crossed his features, only encouraged me to proceed. “No really,” said I, with affected serious-

ness, "I am quite in earnest. One day or other I suppose I must give somebody a right to me, and it may as well be Lord Frederick as another. Marriage will be at best but a heartless business to me—Heigho!"

"I hope it will be otherwise," said Maitland, with a sigh not quite so audible as mine, but a little more sincere.

"No, no," said I, sighing again, "love is out of the question with me. The creatures that dangle after me want either a toy upon which to throw away their money, or money to throw away upon their toys.—A heart would be quite lost upon any of them. If, indeed, a man of sense and worth had attached himself to me—a man with sincerity enough to tell me my faults,—with gentleness to do it kindly,—with—something in his character, perhaps in his manners, to secure respect—he might have—have found me not incapable of—of an animated—I mean of a—a very respectful friendship."

I could not utter this last sentence without palpable emotion. Nature, which had done

much to unfit me for deliberate coquetry, faltered in my voice, and stained my cheek with burning blushes. In the confusion which I had brought upon myself, I should have utterly forgotten to watch the success of my experiment, had not my attention been drawn by the tremor of Maitland's hand. I ventured, thus encouraged, to steal a glance at his countenance.

His eye was fixed upon me with a keenness which seemed to search my very soul. Deep glowing crimson flushed his face. It was only for a moment. His colour instantly fading to more than its natural palleness, he almost threw from him the hand which he had held. "Oh, Ellen!" he cried, in a tone of bitter reproach, "how can you! suspecting, as I see you do, the power of your witchery over me, how can you!—Others might despise my weakness—I myself despise it—but with you it should have been sacred."

Where is the spirit of prophecy which can foretell how that, which at a distance seems desirable, will affect us when it meets our grasp. Who could have believed

that this avowal, so long expected, so eagerly anticipated, should have been heard only with shame and mortification ! Far, indeed, from the elation of conquest were my feelings, while I shrunk before the rebuke of him whose displeasure had, with me, the power of a reproving angel. Abashed and confounded, I did not even dare to raise my eyes, whilst Maitland, retreating from me, stood for some moments in thoughtful silence. Approaching me again, “ No,” said he in a low constrained voice, “ I cannot speak to you now. Give me a few minutes to-morrow—They shall be the last.”

Before I could have articulated a word had the universe depended upon my utterance, Maitland was gone.

As soon as my recollection returned, I stole, like a culprit, to my own apartment, where, locking myself in, I fell into a reverie ; in which stifled self-reproach, resentment against Miss Arnold, and an undefined dread of the consequences of Maitland’s displeasure, were but faintly relieved by complacency towards my own victorious charms. Maitland’s parting words rung in my ears ;

and though I endeavoured to persuade myself that they were dictated by a resentment which could not resist the slightest concession from me, they never recurred to my mind unattended by some degree of alarm. I was determined, however, that no consideration should tempt me to betray the cause of my sex, by humbling myself before a proud lover; "and, if he be resolv-ed to break my chains, let him do so," said I, "if he can." I justly considered the loss of a lover as no very grievous misfortune. Alas! I could not then estimate the evil of losing such a friend as Maitland.

The next morning he came early to claim his audience; not such as I had seen him the evening before; but calm, self-pos-sessed, and dignified. He entered upon his subject with little apparent effort; tel-ling met hat he was come to give me, if I had the patience to receive it, the explana-tion to which he conceived me entitled, after the inadvertencies which had at differ-ent times betrayed his secret. Provoked by his composure, I answered, that " explana-tion was quite unnecessary, since I did not

apprehend that either his conduct or motives could at all affect me."

"Suffer me then," said he, mildly, "to explain them for my own sake, that I may, if I can, escape the imputation of caprice." I made some light silly reply ; and, affecting the utmost indifference, took my knotting and sat down. "Have you no curiosity," said Maitland, "to know how you won and how you have lost a heart that could have loved you faithfully ! Though my affections are of no value to you, you may one day prize those which the same errors might alienate."

"That is not very likely Sir," said I. I shall probably not approach so near the last stage of celibacy as to catch my advantage of any wandering fancy which may cross a man's mind."

"This was no wandering fancy," said Maitland with calm seriousness. "You are the first woman I ever loved ; and I shall retain the most tender, the most peculiar interest in your welfare, long after what is painful in my present feelings has passed away. But I must fly while I can—before

I lose the power to relinquish what I know it would be misery to obtain."

" Oh Sir, I assure you that this is a misery I should spare you," cried I ; my heart swelling with impatience at a stile of profession, for it cannot be called courtship, to which I was so little accustomed.

" Now this is childish," said Maitland, " Are you angry at having escaped being teased with useless importunity ? If you would have me feel all the pang of leaving you, call back the candour and sweetness that first bewitched me. For it was not your beauty, Ellen. I had seen you more than once ere I observed that you were beautiful, and twenty times ere I felt it. It was your playful simplicity, your want of all design, your perfect transparency of mind, that won upon me before I was aware ; and when I was weary of toil, and sick of the heartlessness and duplicity of mankind, I turned to you, and thought ——, it matters not what."

Maitland paused, but I was in no humour to break the silence. My anger gave place to a more gentle feeling. I felt that

I had possessed, that I had lost, the approbation of Maitland, and the tears were rising to my eyes; but the fear that he should ascribe them to regret for the loss of his stoic-love, forced them back to the proud heart.

“ Yet,” continued Maitland, “ I perceived, pardon my plainness, that your habits and inclinations were such as must be fatal to every plan of domestic comfort; and at four and thirty a man begins to foresee, that, after the raptures of the lover are past, the husband has a long life before him, in which he must either share his joys and his sorrows with a friend, or exact the submission of an inferior. To be a restraint upon your pleasures is what I could not endure; yet otherwise they must have interfered with every pursuit of my life,—nay, must every hour have shocked my perceptions of right and wrong. Nor is this all,” continued Maitland, guiding my comprehension by the increased solemnity of his manner. “ Who that seeks a friend would choose one who would consider his employments as irksome, his pleasures as

fantastic, his hopes as a dream!—one who would regard the object of his supreme desire as men do a fearful vision, visiting them unwelcome in their hours of darkness, but slighted or forgotten in every happier season. No, Ellen! the wife of a Christian must be more than the toy of his leisure;—she must be his fellow-labourer, his fellow-worshipper."

"Very well Sir!" interrupted I, my spirit of impatience again beginning to stir. "Enough of my disqualifications for an office which I really have no ambition to fill."

"I believe you Miss Percy," returned Maitland, "and that belief is all that reconciles me to my sacrifice;—therefore, beware how you weaken it by these affected airs of scorn. I assure you, they were not necessary to convince me that you are not to be won unsought. It was this conviction which made me follow you even when I saw my danger. I flattered myself that I might be useful to you,—or rather, perhaps, this was the only device by which I could excuse my weakness to my-

self. In a vain trust in the humility of a woman, and a trust yet more vain in the prudence of a lover, I purposed to conceal my feelings till they should be lost amidst the cares of a busy life. Your penetration, or my own imprudence, has defeated that purpose, just as I began to perceive that you are too powerful for cares and business. Nothing then remains, but to fly whilst I have the power. In a fortnight hence, I shall sail for the West Indies."

I started, as if a dart had pierced me. The utmost which I had apprehended from Maitland's threats of desertion, was, that he should withdraw from our family circle. "For the West Indies!" I faintly repeated.

"Yes. It happens not unfortunately that I have business there. But I have dwelt too long upon myself and my concerns. Since I must 'cut off the right hand,' better the stroke were past. I have only one request to make,—one earnest request, and then," —. He paused. I would have asked the nature of his request, but a rising in my throat threatened to be-

tray me, and I only ventured an inquiring look. Maitland took my hand; and the demon of coquetry was now so entirely laid, that I suffered him to retain it, without a struggle. "Dear, ever dear Ellen," said he, "many an anxious thought will turn to you when we are far asunder,—repay me for them all, by granting one petition. It is, that you will confide your difficulties, whatever they be, to Miss Mortimer; and, when you do so, give her this packet."

"No, no, interrupted I, with quickness. "The sum I owe Lord Frederick is a trifle compared to what you suppose it. It was the price of a bauble,—a vile bauble. It was no secret,—hundreds saw it,—accident, mere accident made me" —

Shocked at the emotion I was betraying, and in horror lest Maitland should impute it to a humbling cause, I suddenly changed my manner; haughtily declaring, that I would neither distress my friend in her illness, nor incur any new obligation. Maitland modestly endeavoured to shake my determination; but, finding me resolute, he

rose to be gone. "Farewell Ellen," said he,—"Every blessing" —, the rest could not reach my ear, but while I have being, I shall remember his look as he turned from me. It was anguish, rendered more touching by a faint struggle for a smile, that came like a watery beam upon the troubled deep, making the sadness more dreary. I turned to a window, and watched till he disappeared.

I have lived to be deserted by all mankind,—to wander houseless in a land of strangers,—to gaze upon the crowds of an unknown city, assured that I should see no friend,—to be secluded, as in a living grave, from human intelligence and human sympathy; but never did I feel so desolately alone, as when I turned to the chamber where Maitland had been, and felt that he was gone. Miss Mortimer's words flashed on my mind. "The good and the wise will one by one forsake you." "They have forsaken me! all forsaken me," I cried, as, throwing myself upon the ground, I rested my head upon a seat which Maitland had left, hid my face in my arm, and wept.

CHAP. XIII.

In a dull stream, which moving slow,
You hardly see the current flow,
When a small breeze obstructs the course,
It whirls about for want of force ;
And in its narrow circle, gathers
Nothing but chaff, and straw, and feathers.
The current of a female mind
Stops thus, and turns with every wind.
Thus whirling round, together draws,
Fools, fops, and rakes, for chaff and straws.

SWIFT.

I IMAGINE that such of my readers as are still in their teens, and of course expect to find Cupid in ambush at every corner, will now smile sagaciously, and pronounce, "that poor Ellen was certainly in love." If so, I must unequivocally assert, that, in this instance, their penetration has failed them. Maitland had piqued my vanity; he had of late interested my curiosity; his conversation often amused me, and the

more I was accustomed to it, the more it pleased. It is said, that they who have been restored to sight, find pleasure in the mere exercise of their newly regained faculty, without reference to its usefulness, or even to the beauty of the objects they behold; so I, without a thought of improving by Maitland's conversation, and with feeble perceptions of its excellence, was pleased to find in it occupation for faculties, which, but for him, might have slumbered inactive. I had a sort of filial confidence in his good will, and a respect approaching to reverence for his abilities and character. But this was all; for, amidst all my follies, I had escaped that susceptibility which makes so many young women idle, and so many old ones ridiculous. Lest, however, my assertion seem liable to the suspicion which attaches to the declarations of the accused, I shall mention an irrefragable proof of its truth. In less than twelve hours after Maitland had taken his final leave, I was engaged in an animated flirtation with Lord Frederick de Burgh. It is true, that for some days I used to start

when the knocker sounded at the usual hour of Maitland's visit, and to hear with a vague sensation of disappointment some less familiar step approach. It is true that I loved not to see his seat occupied by others, and that I never again looked towards the spot where he finally disappeared from my sight, without feeling its association with something painful. But I suppose it may be laid down as a maxim, that no woman who is seriously attached to one man, will trifle, *con spirito*, with another ; and my flirtations with Lord Frederick were not only continued, but soon began to threaten a decisive termination.

In spite of my father's remonstrance, Lord Frederick's daily visits were continued ; for how could I interdict them after his Lordship had said, nay sworn, that I must admit him, or make London a desert to him. We also met often at the house of Lady St Edmunds, where, after Maitland's departure, I became a more frequent guest than ever. Placable as Miss Arnold had hitherto found me, I could not immediately forgive her discovery to Maitland ; for, wil-

ling to throw from myself the blame of losing him, I more than half ascribed his desertion to her interference. In resentment against one favourite, I betook myself with more ardour to the other ; with whom I spent many an hour, more pleasant, it must be owned, than profitable.

Lady St Edmunds had a boudoir to which only her most select associates were admitted. Nothing which taste could approve was wanting to its decoration,—nothing which sense desires could be added to its luxury. The walls glowed with the sultry scenes of Claude, and the luxuriant designs of Titian. The day-light stole mellowed on the eye through a bower of flowering orange trees and myrtles ; or alabaster lamps imitated the softness of moonshine. Airy Grecian couches lent grace to the forms which rested on them ; and rose-coloured draperies shed on the cheek a becoming bloom. No cumbrous footmen were permitted to invade this retreat of luxury. Their office was here supplied by a fairy-footed smiling girl, whose figure and attire partook the elegance of all around. Had books been

needful to kill the time, here were abundance well suited to their place ; not works of puzzling science or dull morality ; but modern plays, novels enriched with slanderous tales or caricatures of living characters, and fashionable sonnets, guarded to the ear of decency, but deadly to her spirit. In this temple of effeminacy, Lady St Edmunds and I generally passed our morning hours, and it usually happened that Lord Frederick joined the party. Here I often called forth my musical powers to delight my companions, soothed in my turn by the yet sweeter sounds of flattery and love. The easy manners of my hostess banished all restraint. The timidity which had at first admired without venturing to copy, fled before her neat raillery and free example ; and high spirits, encouragement, and inconsiderateness, often led me to the utmost limits of discretion.

In such a scene, with such associates, can it be wondered, that I forgot the manly sense, the hardy virtues of Maitland ? No longer counteracted by his ascendancy, or checked by the warnings of Miss Morti-

mer, Lady St Edmunds' influence increased every day, and strengthened into an affection which utterly blinded me to every impropriety in her conduct and sentiments; —an awful influence, which almost every girl of seventeen allows more or less to some favourite. Happy the daughter who finds that favourite where nature has secured to her a real friend;—happy the mother who gains support for her authority in the enthusiastic attachments of youth!

As Lady St Edmunds was no restraint upon me, her presence in our coterie was rather advantageous to Lord Frederick, banishing the reserve of a tête-à-tête; and allowing him constantly to offer gallantries too indirect to provoke repulse, yet too pointed to be overlooked. Indeed, such attentions from him were now become so habitual to me, that I accepted of them as things of course, without consideration either of motive or consequence. They amused and flattered me; and amusement and flattery were the sum of my desires.

Things were in this train, when, one morning, the usual party being met in the

boudoir, Lady St Edmunds was called away to receive a visitor. She went without ceremony ; for she never reminded me of our difference of rank, by any of those correct formalities by which the great are accustomed to distance their inferiors. She gaily enjoined Lord Frederick to entertain me, and he accepted of the office with a look which prompted me, I know not why, to move hastily towards a harp, on which I struck some chords. Lord Frederick stopped me ; addressing me so much more seriously than he had ever done before, that, in my surprise, I suffered him to proceed without interruption. In the warmest phrase of passion, he besought me to tell him how long I meant to continue his lingering probation ; and protested, that he was no longer able to endure my delays. The presumptuousness of this language was softened by tones and gestures so humble, that I found it impossible to be angry ; but I was not a little confounded at a security which I had been far from intending to authorize. Recovering myself as well as I was able, I affected to receive his protes-

tations in jest, telling him his gallantries were now so hackneyed, that I had already exhausted all my wit in replying to them ; and that if he wished to find me at all entertaining, he must positively call a new subject.

His Lordship abated nothing of his solemnity. He fell upon his knees, conjured me to be serious, and talked of as many cruelties, racks, and tortures, as would have furnished the dungeons of the Inquisition ; yet still the drift of his rhetoric seemed to be only this, that he had now been for a very competent time the martyr of my charms, and therefore was entitled to claim his reward.

Though somewhat alarmed, I still tried to laugh off the attack ; telling him, that he had changed his manner much to the worse, since gravity in him seemed the most preposterous thing in nature. “ Was it possible,” Lord Frederick inquired with a tragedy exclamation, “ that I could thus punish him for a disguise of gaiety which he had assumed only to mislead indifferent eyes, but which he was certain had never

deceived my penetration?" And then he boldly appealed to my candour, "Whether I had ever for a moment misunderstood him?" Too much startled and confounded to persevere in my levity, I replied in the words of simple truth, "that I had never bestowed any consideration upon his meaning since my father had settled the matter."

Lord Frederick poured forth all the established forms of abuse against parental authority; execrating in a most lover-like manner, the idea of subjecting the affections to its control, and protesting his belief, that I had too much spirit to sacrifice him to such tyranny. Piqued at my lover's implied security, I answered, "that I had no inclination to resist my father's will; and that so long as he did not require me to marry any man who was particularly disagreeable to me, I should very willingly leave a negative in his power." Lord Frederick struck his hand upon his forehead, and raised his handkerchief to his eyes, as if to conceal extreme agitation. "Cruel, cruel, Miss Percy!" he cried, "if such are, indeed, your

sentiments,—if you are, indeed, determined to submit to the decision of your inhuman father, why—why did you, with such barbarous kindness, restore the hopes which he had destroyed? Why did you, in this very room, allow me to hope that you would reward my faithful love,—that you would fly with me to that happy land where marriage is still free!"

My masquerade folly thus recalled to my recollection, the blood rushed tumultuously to my face and bosom. Unable to repel the charge, and terrified by this glimpse of the shackles which my imprudence had forged for me, I stammered out, that, "whatever I might have said in a thoughtless moment, I was sure that no friend of Lord Frederick's or mine would advise either of us to so rash a step."

"No friend of mine," returned Lord Frederick, using the gestures of drying his fine blue eyes, "shall ever again be consulted. Could I have foreseen your cruel treatment, never would I have put it in the power, even of my nearest relative, to in-

jure you by publishing the hopes you had given."

The hint, conveyed in these words, was not lost upon me. I concluded, that Lord Frederick had thought himself authorized to talk of the encouragement he had received. Our sense of impropriety is rarely so just as to gain nothing from anticipating the judgment of our fellow-creatures'; and the levity which I had practised as an innocent trifling, took a very different form, when I saw it, by sympathy, in the light in which it might soon be seen by hundreds. The folly into which I had been seduced by malice, vanity, and the love of amusement, would stand charactered in the world's sentence, as unjustifiable coquetry. Viewed in its consequences, as ruinous to the peace of a heart that loyed me, I myself scarcely bestowed upon it a gentler name. Confused, perplexed, and distressed, not daring to meet the eye of the man whom I had injured, I sat looking wistfully towards the door, more eager to escape from my present embarrassment than able to provide against the future. Lord Frederick instant-

ly saw his advantage. “ I have wronged you my heavenly Ellen,” he cried, throwing himself in rapture at my feet. “ I see that, upon reflection, you will yet allow my claim. How could I suspect my dear generous Miss Percy of trifling with the fondest passion that ever warmed a human breast ?”

I involuntarily recoiled, for I had never been less tenderly disposed towards Lord Frederick than at that moment. “ Really, my Lord,” said I, “ even if I could return all this enthusiasm, which indeed I cannot, I should give a poor specimen of my generosity by consenting to involve you in the difficulties which might be the consequence of disobliging my father.”

Lord Frederick cursed wealth in the most disinterested manner imaginable,—swore that “ the possession of his adorable Ellen, was all he asked of Heaven,—and fervently wished, that the splendour of his own fortune, and the humbleness of mine, had given him an opportunity of proving how lightly he prized the dross when put in balance with my charms.” Though the loftiness of this

stile was too incongruous with Lord Frederick's general manner to excite no surprise, I must own, that it awakened not one doubt of his sincerity,—for what will not vanity believe. The more credit I gave his generosity, the more did I feel the injustice of my past conduct, yet the more painful it became to enter upon explanation ; and I was not yet practised enough in coquetry, to suppress the embarrassment which faltered on my tongue, as I told Lord Frederick, that “ I was sorry—very sorry, and much astonished ; and that I had never suspected him of allowing such a romantic fancy to take possession of his mind ; that my father's determination must excuse me to his Lordship and to the world, for refusing to sanction his hopes.” Lord Frederick, in answer, vehemently averred, that his hopes had no connection with my father's decision, since, after that decision, he had been permitted to express his passion without repulse. He recalled several thoughtless concessions which I had forgotten as soon as made. Without formal detail, he dexterously contrived to remind me of the ring which I had

allowed him to keep ; and of the clandestine correspondence which I had begun from folly, and continued from weakness. He again referred to my half consent at the masquerade. Finally, he once more appealed to myself, whether, all these circumstances considered, his hopes deserved to be called presumptuous.

During this almost unanswerable appeal, I had instinctively moved towards the door, but Lord Frederick placed himself so as to intercept my escape. Terrified, and revolting from the bonds which awaited me, yet conscious that I had virtually surrendered my freedom,—eager to escape from an engagement which yet I had not the courage to break,—I began a hesitating, incoherent reply ; but I felt like one who is roused from the oppression of night-mare, when it was interrupted by the entrance of Lady St Edmunds. I almost embraced my friend in my gratitude for this fortunate deliverance ; but I was too much disconcerted to prolong my visit, and, taking a hasty leave, I returned home.

I had so long been accustomed to find

relief from every difficulty in the superior ingenuity of Miss Arnold, that my late resentment, which had already begun to evaporate, entirely gave way to my habitual dependence upon her counsels. Not that I, at the time, acknowledged this motive to mysel. Far from it. I placed my renewed confidence solely to the credit of a generous placability of nature ; for when any action of mine claimed kindred with virtue, I could not afford to inquire too seriously into its real parentage. However, I took an early opportunity of acquainting Juliet with my dilemma. But my friend's readiness of resource appeared now to have forsaken her. She protested that " no surprise could exceed hers ; that she had never suspected Lord Frederick of carrying the matter so far." She feared " that, however unjustly, he might consider himself as aggrieved by a sudden rupture of our intimacy ; hinted how much the affair might be misrepresented by the industrious malice of Lady Maria ; and lamented that, on such occasions, a censorious world was but too apt to take part with the accuser. But

then, to be sure, every thing must be ventured rather than disobey my father ; she would be the last person to advise me to a breach of duty, though she had little doubt that it would be speedily forgiven.” In short, all my skill in cross-examination was insufficient to discover whether Miss Arnold thought I should dismiss Lord Frederick, or fly with him to Scotland ; or, taking that middle course so inviting to those who waver between the right and the convenient, endeavour to keep him in suspense till circumstances should guide my decision. Like a prudent counsellor, she gave no direct advice, except that which alone she was certain would be followed ; she entreated me to hear the opinion of Lady St Edmunds, and then to judge for myself.

The opinion of Lady St Edmunds was much more explicitly given. She insisted that an overstrained delicacy made me trifl^e with the man whom I really preferred. She laughed at my denials, asserting that it was impossible I could be such a little actress as to have deceived all my acquaintance, not one of whom entertained a

doubt of my partiality for Lord Frederick. One exception to this position I remembered with a sigh; but he who best could have read my heart, and most wisely guided it, was already far on his way to another hemisphere. In vain did I protest my indifference towards all mankind. Lady St Edmunds, kissing my cheek, told me she would save my blushes, by guessing for me what I had not yet confessed to myself. "Well!" cried I, a little impatiently, "if I am in love with Lord Frederick, I am sure I don't wish to marry him. I cannot be mistaken upon that point. Some time ago I should not much have cared, but now, *indeed*, I would rather not."

"Why should you be more reluctant now than formerly," inquired Lady St Edmunds, looking me intently in the face, "unless you have begun to prefer another?"

"Oh not at all!" answered I, with great simplicity, "I prefer nobody in particular. But of late I have sometimes thought that if I must marry, I would have a husband whom I could respect—whom all the world

respected. One who could enlighten and convince, aye, and awe other men,—one who need only raise his hand to silence an assembled nation!—one whose very glance” —

I stopped, and the glow which warmed my cheek deepened with an altered feeling; for a smile began to play upon the lip of Lady St Edmunds, and where is the enthusiasm that shrinks not from a smile? My friend, laughing, asked, which of the heroes of romance I chose to have revived for my mate? “But,” added she, shaking her head, “when Oroondates makes his appearance, we must not let Frederick tell tales; for constancy and generosity were indispensable to a heroine in his time.”

Seeing me look disconserted she paused; then throwing her white arm round my neck, “My dearest Ellen,” said she, “let me candidly own that your treatment of poor De Burgh is not quite what I should have expected from you.” “But,” continued she with a tender sigh, “had you been all that my partiality expected, you must have become too, too dear to me,

would have wiled my heart away from all living beings."

" Dear Lady St Edmunds," cried I, clasping her to my breast, " tell me what you expect from me now, and trust me I will never disappoint you."

" My charming girl !" exclaimed Lady St Edmunds, " far be it from me to dictate to you. Let your own excellent heart and understanding be your counsellors."

" Indeed," returned I, " it would be an act of real charity to decide for me. I am so terribly bewildered. I would not for the world act basely to Lord Frederick, and I rather think that before he began to tease me about marrying him, I liked him better than any body—that is than any man—almost. But then when I think of my father—and I love him so dearly, and he has no other child—no one to love him but only me. Indeed I cannot bear to thwart him."

" My dear Ellen," said Lady St Edmunds, " I believe your father to be a very worthy old gentleman, and I have a great respect for him ; but, indeed, his cause could not be committed to worse hands

than mine ; for I can see no earthly business that he has to interfere in the matter. It is not he who is to be married. For my own part, I married in very spite of my father ; and if I live till my children are marriageable, I shall assuredly be reasonable enough to let them be happy in their own way."

For a while, I defended the parental right, or rather the natural sentiment which still remained to restrain my folly ;—but the proper foundation of filial duty, of all duty, was wanting in my mind, and therefore the superstructure was unstable as the vapour curling before the breeze. Even my good propensities had not the healthy nature of real virtue. They were at best but the fevered flush, adorning my sickly state in the eyes of others, and fatally disguising it from my own. By frequent argument, by occasional reflections, and by dexterous confounding of truth and falsehood, Lady St Edmunds so far darkened my moral perceptions, that Lord Frederick's claim seemed to outweigh that of my father. Nor was the task hard ; for

honour and humanity are sounds more soothing to human pride than the harsh name of submission.

Lord Frederick himself meanwhile watched vigilantly over his own interests, and was abundantly importunate and encroaching. Miss Arnold, indeed, continued to affect prudent counsels; but while she offered me such feeble dissuasives as rather served to excite than to deter, she procured or invented intelligence, which, with every expression of indignation, she communicated to me, that Lady Maria had so far misrepresented my indiscretion at the masquerade, as to make my marriage with Lord Frederick a matter of prudence at least, if not of necessity. Thus goaded on every side, without steadiness to estimate the real extent of my difficulties, or resolution to break through them, having no special dislike to Lord Frederick, nor any conscious preference for another, I sanctioned in weakness the claims which I had conferred in folly. I gave my lover permission to believe that I would soon reward his constancy; if it can be called reward

to obtain a wife, whose violation of her early ties gives the strongest pledge that she will disregard those which are new.

Still a lingering reluctance, the constitution of my sex, and the expiring struggles of duty, made me defer, from time to time, the performance of my engagement. But I was hurried at last into its fulfilment, by one of those casualties which are allowed to decide the most important concerns of the thoughtless and unprincipled. My father one day surprised Lord Frederick at my feet; and glad perhaps of an opportunity to mark his contempt for the artificial distinctions of society, as well as justly indignant at the disregard shewn to his injunctions, he dismissed my lover from the house, in terms more decided than courtly. As my father had four stout footmen to enforce his commands, his lordship had no choice but acquiescence. He therefore retired; and my father, raising his foot to the pannel of the room door, shut it with a force that made the house shake. His sense of dignity for once giving way to indignation, my father, instead of taking his

well known posture of exhortation with his back to the fire, walked up to me, and strongly grasping my hand, exclaimed, “What the d—l do you mean, Ellen Percy? Did not I tell you, I wouldn’t have this puppy of a lord coming here a fortune-hunting? Don’t I know the kidney of you all? Don’t I know, that if you let a fellow chatter nonsense to you long enough, he is sure of you at last?—Look you, Ellen Percy,—let me have no more of this. I can give you three hundred thousand pounds, and I have a scheme in my head that may make it twice as much;—and I’ll have your eldest son called John Percy, aye, and his son after him,—and you shall marry no proud, saucy, aristocratical beggar, to look down upon the man who was the making of him;—d——n me, if you do, Ellen Percy.” Then throwing my arm from him, with a vehemence that made me stagger, he quitted the room.

Even in minds far better regulated than mine, violence is more likely to produce resentment than submission. My surprise quickly gave place to indignation. The

unceremonious expulsion of my visitor, seemed nothing short of an insult. To place me at the head of a family into which I must admit no guest without permission, was treating me like a baby!—a disgrace scarcely endurable to those who are still a little doubtful of their right to be treated like women. I earnestly recommend to all ladies who see cause of offence against their rightful governors, (an accident which will sometimes happen, notwithstanding the universal meekness of ladies, and the well-known moderation of gentlemen) never to indulge in meditations upon past injury, much less to exercise their prophetic eye upon future aggression. Ill-humour gives contingent evils such a marvellous appearance of certainty, that we seldom think it unjust to punish them as if already committed. No inference should have been drawn from my father's hasty words, except that, being spoken in anger, they could not convey his permanent sentiments; but I pondered them until I discovered that they clearly foretold my being sacrificed to some ugly, old,

vulgar, ignorant, gouty, purse-proud, blinking-eyed, bandy-legged, stock-jobbing animal, with a snuff-coloured coat, a brown wig, and a pen behind his ear. No wonder if the assured prospect of such outrage redoubled mine ire.

But it had not yet reached its consummation. At dinner, Miss Arnold happened to mention a public breakfast, to which Lady B—— had invited us for the following morning. My father, who was far from affecting privacy in his injunctions or reproofs, informed me, without circumlocution, that I should go neither to Lady B——'s nor anywhere else, till I gave him my word of honour that I would have no intercourse with Lord Frederick de Burgh. "I must stay at home then," said I, with an air of surly resolution, "for there is to be a ball after the breakfast, and I have promised to dance with Lord Frederick."

"Eat your breakfast at home then, Miss Percy," said my father; "and no fear but you shall have as good a one as any Lady B—— in the land."

Great was my disappointment at this

sentence ; for I had procured for the occasion a dress, upon which Lady Maria de Burgh had fixed her heart, when there was no longer time to make another robe with similar embroidery. But my wrath scorned to offer entreaty or compromise ; and, leaving the table, I retreated to my chamber, seeking sullen comfort in the thought that I might soon emancipate myself from thraldom. In the course of the evening, however, Miss Arnold, whose influence with my father had of late increased surprisingly, found means to obtain a mitigation of his sentence ; but the good humour which might have been restored by this concession, was banished by an angry command, to refrain from all such engagements with Lord Frederick for the future.

The next morning, while we were at breakfast (for a public breakfast by no means supersedes the necessity of a private one) my father received a letter, which he read with visible discomposure, and, hastily quitting his unfinished meal, immediately left the house. I was somewhat startled by his manner, and Miss Arnold

appeared to sympathise still more deeply in his uneasiness ; but the hour of dressing approached, and, in that momentous concern, I forgot my father's disquiet.

The fêté passed as fêtes are wont to do. Every one wore the face of pleasure, and a few were really pleased. The dancing began, and I joined in it with Lord Frederick. Among the spectators who crowded round the dancers, were Lady Maria de Burgh and her silly Strephon, Lord Glendower. I at first imagined, that she declined dancing, because the lady who was first in the set, was one of whom she might have found it difficult to obtain precedence; but, just as it was my turn to begin, she advanced and took her station above me. Provoked by an impertinence which I ought to have despised, I remonstrated against this breach of ball-room laws. Lady Maria answered, with a haughty smile, that she rather conceived she had a right to dance before me. In vain did Lord Frederick interfere. In vain did I angrily represent, that the right claimed by her Ladyship, ceased after the dance was begun. How could Lady Maria yield

while the disputed dress was full in her eye? At last, seeing that the dance was suspended by our dispute, I proposed to those who stood below me, that, rather than allow such an infringement of our privileges, we should sit down. They, however, had no inclination to punish themselves for the ill-breeding of another; and I, scorning to yield, indignantly retired alone.

Lord Frederick followed me, as usual, and——but why should I dwell upon my folly? Remaining displeasure against my father, a desire to have revenge and precedence of Lady Maria, overcame for an hour my reluctance to the fulfilment of my ill-starred engagement; and in that hour, Lord Frederick had obtained my consent to set out with him the very next morning for Scotland. Such are the amiable motives that sometimes enter into what is called a love-match!

To prevent suspicion, and by that means to delay pursuit, it was agreed, that Lady St Edmunds should be made acquainted with our design; that she should call upon me early and convey me in her carriage to

Barnet, where she was to resign me to the guardianship of my future lord. Miss Arnold I determined not to trust, because she had of late been accustomed to beg, with a very moral shake of the head, that I would never confide an intended elopement to her, lest she should feel it a duty to acquaint my father with my purpose.

CHAP. XIV.

Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While, proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
In gallant trim, the gilded vessel goes,
Youth on the prow, and pleasure at the helm ;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

GRAY.

No sooner had I acquiesced in the arrangements for that event which was to seal my destiny, than a confused feeling of regret came upon me. An oppression stole upon my spirits. The sounds of flattery and protestation I heard like a drowsy murmur, reaching the ear without impressing the mind ; and the gay forms of my companions flitted before me like their fellow moths in the sun-beam, which the eye pursues, but not the thoughts. Yet I had not resolution to quit the scene, which had lost

its charms for me. To think of meeting my father's eye; or being left to meditate alone in a home which I was so soon to desert; of seeing the objects which had been familiar to my childhood wear the dreary aspect of that which we look upon perhaps for the last time; might have appalled one far better enured than I to daring the assaults of pain. But at last even the haunts of dissipation were forsaken by the throng, and I had no choice but to go. Late in the night, silently, with the stealthy pace of guilt, I re-entered that threshold which, till now, I had never trode but with the firm step of confidence. With breath suppressed, with the half reverted eye of fear, I passed my father's chamber, as superstition passes the haunt of departed spirits. In profound silence I suffered my attendant to do her office; then threw myself upon my bed, with an eager but fruitless wish to escape the tumult of my thoughts in forgetfulness.

Sleep, however, came not at my bidding. Yet, watchful as I was, I might rather be said to dream than to think. A well order-

ed mind can dare to confront difficulty,—can choose whether patience shall endure, or prudence mitigate, or resolution overcome the threatened evil. But when was this vigorous frame of soul gained in the lap of self-indulgence? When was the giant foiled by him who was accustomed to shrink even from shadows? The dread of my father's displeasure,—an undefined reluctance to the connection I was forming,—these, and a thousand other feelings which crowded on my mind, were met with the plea, that no choice now remained to me; the stale resort of those who are averse from their fate, but more averse from the exertion which might overcome it. The upbraiding of conscience, I answered with the supposed claims of honour; silencing the inward voice, which might have told me, how culpable was that levity which had set justice and filial duty at unnatural variance. Considerate review of the past, rational plan for the future, had no more place in my thoughts, than in the fevered fancy that sees on every side a thousand unsightly shapes, which, ere it can define one of

them, have given place to a thousand more. At last this turmoil yielded to mere bodily exhaustion; and my distressful musings were interrupted by short slumbers, from which I started mid-way in my fall from the precipice, or chilled with struggling in the flood.

I rose long before my usual hour, and sought relief from inaction in preparations for my ill-omened journey. After selecting and packing up some necessary articles of dress, I sat down to write a few lines to be delivered to my father after my departure. But I found it impossible to express my feelings, yet disguise my purpose; and having written nearly twenty billets, and destroyed them all, I determined to defer asking forgiveness till I had consummated my offence.

The hour of breakfast, which my father always insisted upon having punctually observed, was past before I could summon courage to enter the parlour. I approached the door, then, losing resolution, retired,—drew near again, and listened whether my father's voice sounded from

within. All was still, and I ventured to proceed, ashamed that a servant, who stood near, should witness my hesitation. I cast a timid glance towards my father's accustomed seat;—it was vacant, and I drew a deep breath, as if a mountain had been lifted from my breast. “Where is Mr Percy?” I inquired. “He went out early, Ma'am,” answered the servant, “and said he should not breakfast at home.” Miss Arnold and I sat down to a silent and melancholy meal. I could neither speak of the subject which weighed upon my heart, nor force my attention to any other theme.

And now a new distress assailed me. While I had every moment expected the presence of an injured parent, dread of that presence was all powerful. But now when that expectation was withdrawn, my soul recoiled from tearing asunder the bonds of affection, ere they were loosened by one parting word,—one look of farewell. I remembered, that our last intercourse had been chilled by mutual displeasure, and could I go without uttering one kindly expression?—without striving to win one little

endearment which I might treasure in my heart, as perhaps a last relict of a father's love? I quitted my scarcely tasted meal, to watch at a window for his coming. My eye accidentally rested on the spot where Maitland had disappeared, and another shade was added to the dark colour of my thoughts. "He will never know," thought I, "how deeply my honour is pledged; and what will he think of me, when he hears that I have left my father?—left him without even one farewell! No! this I will not do."

The resolution was scarcely formed, when I saw Lady St Edmunds' carriage drive rapidly up to the door. I hastened to receive her; and, drawing her apart, informed her of my father's absence, and besought her, either to send or go, and excuse me to Lord Frederick for this one day at least. Lady St Edmunds expostulated against this instance of caprice. She represented my father's absence as a favourable circumstance, tending to save me the pain of suppressing, and the danger of betraying my feelings. She protested, that she would never be ac-

cessory to inflicting so cruel a disappointment upon a lover of Lord Frederick's passionate temperament. She remonstrated so warmly against the barbarity of such a breach of promise, and expressed such apprehension of its consequences, that, in the blindness of vanity, I suffered myself to imagine it more inhuman to destroy an expectation of yesterday, than to blight the hopes of seventeen years. Lady St Edmunds immediately followed up her victory, and hurried me away. I sought the companion of my early days, and hastily took such an ambiguous farewell as my fatal secret would allow. "Juliet," said I, wringing her hand, "I must leave you for a while. If my father miss me, you must supply my place. I charge you, dearest Juliet, if you have any regard for me, shew him such kindness as—as I ought to have done." My strange expressions,—my faltering voice,—my strong emotion, could not escape the observation of Miss Arnold; but she was determined not to discover a secret which it was against her interest to know. With an air of the most unconsci-

ous carelessness, she dropped the hand which lingered in her hold, and not a shade crossed the last smile that ever she bestowed upon the friend of her youth.

A dark mist spread before my eyes, as I quitted the dwelling of my father; and ere I was again sensible to the objects which surrounded me, all that had been familiar to my sight were left far behind. Lady St Edmunds cheered my failing spirits,—she soothed me with the words of kindness,—pressed me to become her guest immediately on my return from Scotland,—and to call her house my home, until my reconciliation with my father, a reconciliation of which she spoke as of no uncertain event. She interested me by lively characters of my new connections, pointing out with great acuteness my probable avenues to the favour of each, although it appeared that she herself had missed the way. Her conversation had its usual effect upon me, and, by the time we reached Barnet, my elastic spirits had in part risen from their depression. Yet, when we stopped at the inn-door, something in the nature

of woman made me shrink from the expected sight of my bridegroom ; and I drew back into the corner of the carriage, while Lady St Edmunds alighted. But the flush of modesty deepened to that of anger, when I perceived that my lover was not waiting to welcome his bride. “ A good specimen this of the ardour of a secure admirer,” thought I, as in moody silence I followed my companion into a parlour.

The attendant whom Lady St Edmunds had dispatched to inquire for Lord Frederick now returned to inform her that his lordship had not arrived. “ He must be here in five minutes at farthest,” said Lady St Edmunds, in answer to a kind of sarcastic laugh with which I received this intimation ; and she stationed herself at a window, to watch for his arrival, while I affected to be wholly occupied with the portraits of the Durham Ox and the Godolphin Arabian. The five minutes, however, were doubly past, and still no Lord Frederick appeared. Lady St Edmunds continued to watch for him, foretelling his approach in every carriage that drove up ;

but when her prediction had completely failed, she began to lose patience. "I could have betted a thousand guineas," said she, "that he would serve us this trick; for he never kept an appointment in his life."

"His Lordship need not hurry himself," said I, "for I mean to beg a place in your Ladyship's carriage to town."

After another pause, however, Lady St Edmunds declared her opinion, that some accident must have befallen her nephew. "Only an accident to his memory, Madam, I fancy;" said I, and went on humming an opera tune.

After waiting, however, nearly an hour, my spirit could brook the slight no longer, and I impatiently urged Lady St Edmunds to return with me instantly to town. My friend, for a while, endeavoured to obtain some further forbearance towards the tardy bridegroom; but, finding me peremptory, she consented to go. Still, however, she contrived to delay our departure, by calling for refreshments, and ordering her horses to be fed. At length my indignant pride overcoming even the ascendant

cy of Lady St Edmunds, I impatiently declared, that if she would not instantly accompany me, I would order a carriage, and return home alone.

We had now remained almost two hours at the inn; and my companion beginning herself to despair of Lord Frederick's appearance, no longer protracted our stay. She had already ordered her sociable to the door, when a horseman was heard galloping up with such speed, that, before she could reach the window, he was already dismounted. "This must be he at last!" cried Lady St Edmunds. "Now he really deserves that you should torment him a little."

A man's step approached the door. It opened, and I turned away pouting, yet cast back a look askance, to ascertain whether the intruder were Lord Frederick. I saw only a servant, who delivered a letter to Lady St Edmunds, and retired. The renewed anger and mortification which swelled my breast were soon, however, diverted by an exclamation from my com-

panion, of astonishment not unmixed with dismay. Strong curiosity now mingled with my indignant feelings. I turned to Lady St Edmunds ; and thought I gathered from her confused expressions, that she held in her hand a letter of apology from Lord Frederick, which also contained intelligence of disastrous importance.

What this intelligence was, I saw that she hesitated to announce. Her hesitation alarmed me, for I was obliged to infer from it, that she had news to communicate which concerned me yet more nearly than the desertion of Lord Frederick. Already in a state of irritation which admitted not of cool inquiry, I mixed my scornful expressions of indifference as to the conduct of my renegado lover, with breathless, half-uttered questions of its cause. "Indeed, Miss Percy," stammered Lady St Edmunds, " it is a very—very disagreeable office which Lord Frederick has thought fit to lay upon me. To be sure, every one is liable to misfortune, and I dare say you will shew that you can bear it with proper spirit.

Your father—but you tremble—you had better swallow a little wine.”

“ What of my father !” I exclaimed ; and with an impatience which burst through all restraints, I snatched the letter from her hands ; and, in spite of her endeavours to prevent me, glanced over its contents. I have accidentally preserved this specimen of modern sentiment, and shall here transcribe it.

“ My dear St E.—The Percys are blown to the devil. The old one has failed for near a million. By the luckiest chance upon earth, I heard of it not five minutes before I was to have set out. See what a narrow escape I have had from blowing out my own brains. I would have dispatched Hodson sooner, but waited to make sure of the fact. I shall set about Darnel immediately—a confounded exchange, for the Percy was certainly the finest girl in London. By the bye, make the best story you can for me. I know she likes me, for all her wincing ; and I shall need some little

“ private comfort, if I marry that ugly thing
“ Darnel.

“ Yours ever,

“ F. DE BURGH.

“ You need not quake for your five thousand—
“ Darnel will bite at once.”

The amazement with which I read this letter instantly gave place to doubts of the misfortune which it announced. I had been so accustomed to rest secure in the possession of splendid affluence, that a sudden reverse appeared incredible. It occurred to me that some groundless report must have misled Lord Frederick, who was thus outwitted by his own avarice. But, when I reached the close of his sentimental billet, scorn and indignation overpowered every other feeling. “ The luckiest chance !” I exclaimed. “ Well may he call it so ! Oh what a wretch have I escaped ! What a complication of all that is basest and vilest ! No !” said I, detaining with a disdainful smile the letter which Lady St Edmunds reached her hand to receive, “ No ! this I will keep, as a memorial of the disinterest-

edness of man, and the 'passionate temperament' of Lord Frederick de Burgh. Now, I suppose your ladyship will not object to returning instantly to town."

Lady St Edmunds, who actually seemed to quail beneath my eye, made no objection to this proposal, but followed in silence, as I haughtily led the way to the carriage. We entered, and it drove rapidly homewards.

My thoughts again recurring to the letter, another light now flashed upon me, and a stronger burst of resentment swelled my heart. "This epistle" I suddenly exclaimed, "is a master-teacher. It shews me the sincerity of friends, as well as the tenderness of lovers. Where was your boasted friendship, Lady St Edmunds?—where was your common humanity, when you took advantage of a 'foolish pity—a mistaken sense of honour—to lure me into a marriage with that heartless earth-worm? Me, whom you pretended to love,—me, whom, in common justice and gratitude ——" The remembrance of all my affection for this treacherous friend choked my voice,

and forced bitter—bitter tears to my eyes ; but pride, with a strong effort, suppressed the gentler feeling, and I turned scornfully from the futile excuses and denials of my false counsellor.

The sentiment, however, at length began to give place to apprehension, when I reflected upon the decisive terms in which Lord Frederick announced my father's ruin, and the certainty which he must have attained of the fact, before he could have determined finally to relinquish his pursuit. Some circumstances tended to confirm his assertion. I now recollect the letter which my father had read with such evident emotion ; and his unusual absence in the morning, before the customary hours of business. I vainly endeavoured to balance against these his late boast of his immense possessions, and the improbability of a wreck so sudden. In spite of myself, an anxious dread fell upon me. My knees trembled ; my face now glowed with a hurried flush ; and now a cold shudder ran through my limbs. But disdaining to expose my alarm to her who had betrayed my security,

I proudly struggled with my anguish, affecting a careless disbelief of my misfortune, and an easy scorn of the summer friendships which had fled from its very name. I even strove to jest upon Lord Frederick's premature desertion, bursting at times into wild hysterical laughter.

The duration of our journey seemed endless; yet when I came within sight of my father's house, I would have given a universe to delay the certainty of what I feared. Every breath became almost a sob,— every movement convulsive, while, in the agony of suppressed emotion, I fixed my straining eyes upon my home, as if they could have penetrated into the souls of its inhabitants. The carriage stopped; and, scarcely hearing Lady St Edmunds' polite excuse for not entering the house of mourning, I sprang towards the door.

It was long ere my repeated summons was answered. “Has my father inquired for me?” I hastily demanded, as I entered.

“No Ma'am,—he never spoke.”

“Is he at home?”

"Mr Percy is—is in the house, Ma'am, but—." The man paused, and his face wore a ghastly expression of horror. A dark and shapeless dread rushed across my mind; but the cup was already full, and I could bear no more. I sunk down in strong convulsions.

And must I recall those hours of horror?—Must I bare, one by one, the wounds which no time can heal?—Must I retrace, step by step, the fearful way which led me to the very verge of madness? Could I but escape one horrible picture, I would meet, without recoiling, the remembrance of the rest. But it must not be. To make my melancholy tale intelligible, the arrow must once more enter into my soul, and the truth be told, though it palsy the hand that writes it.

A long forgetfulness was varied only by dim recollections, which came and went like the fitful dreams of delirium. My first distinct impression of the past was formed, when, awaking as if from a deep sleep, I found myself alone in my chamber. My flight,—the humiliation which it had brought upon me,—the treachery of my friend,—the

prospect of ruin, all stood at once before me. My soul, already wounded by affection abused, felt the deserted loneliness in which I was left as a confirmation of the dreaded evil. Juliet Arnold, the companion of my pleasures, came to my thoughts, and her absence stung me like neglect. "All, all have forsaken me," thought I. "Yet there is one heart still open to me: My father will love me still.—My father will take me to his breast. And if I must hear the worst, I will hear it from him who has never betrayed me,—who will never cast me off."

With thoughts like these I quitted my bed, and stole feebly towards my father's apartment. The lights which were wont to blaze cheerfully,—the attendants who used to crowd the halls,—were vanished. A dark twilight faintly shewed my way. A strange and dreary silence reigned around me. I entered my father's chamber. A red glare from the sky gave it a dismal increase of light. Upon a couch lay a form that seemed my father's. The face I saw not. A cloth frightfully stained with blood
—No!—It cannot be told.

CHAP. XV.

— and yet I breathed,
But not the breath of human life.
A serpent round my heart was wreathed,
And stung my every thought to strife.
Alike all time ! Abhorred all place !
Shuddering, I shrunk from nature's face,
Where every line that charmed before,
The blackness of my bosom wore.

LORD BYRON.

FROM long and dangerous faintings, I revived almost to frenzy. I shed no tears. These are the expression of a milder form of suffering. One horrible image filled my soul ; one sense of anguish so strong, so terrible, that every other feeling,—every faculty of mind and body was benumbed in its grasp. Vainly did my awful duties summon me to their performance. I was incapable of action,—almost of thought.

My eye wandered over surrounding objects, but saw them not. The words that were spoken to me conveyed no meaning to my mind.

At length the form of my early friend seemed to flit before me. She spoke, and though I could not follow the meaning of her words, the sounds were those of kindness. The familiar voice, long associated with so many kindly thoughts, reached the heart, waking a milder tone of feeling; and resting my throbbing head upon her breast, I found relief in a passionate burst of tears. Little did I think how small was the share which friendship or compassion could claim in this visit of my friend to the house of mourning. Little did I guess that its chief motive was to rescue the gifts of my prodigality from being confounded with the property of a bankrupt.

She did not long remain with me; for friends more sympathizing than she are soon weary of witnessing the unrestrained indulgence of grief. Yet she did not leave me abruptly. She was so much accustomed to follow the smooth path of concilia-

tion, that she continued to pursue it even when it no longer promised advantage; and she satisfied me with some plausible excuse for going, and with a promise of speedy return.

The tears which for many hours I continued to shed, relieved my oppressed spirit, and by degrees I awoke to a full sense of my altered state. From the proudest security of affluence,—from a fearless confidence in myself, and in all around me, one fatal stroke had dashed me for ever. A darker storm had burst upon me, and wrought a ruin more deep, more irretrievable. That tie, which not the hardest heart resigns without pain, had been torn from mine with force sudden and terrible; and a pang unutterable had been added to that misfortune which turns love, and reverence, and gratitude into anguish. What could be added to those horrors, except that conscience should rise in her fury to remind me that, when my presence might have soothed my father's sorrows, I had been absent with an injurious purpose, and that the arrows of misfortune had been rendered mortal by the rebellion of his child.

This last incurable pang the mercy of Heaven has saved me. I learnt that my father died ignorant of my intended flight.

Miss Arnold, I found, had quitted our house for that of her brother, as soon as our last and worst disaster was discovered by the domestics. Of all the summer friends who had amused my prosperity, not one approached to comfort my affliction. Even my servants, chosen without regard to their moral character, and treated without reference to its improvement; corrupted by the example of dissipation; undisciplined and uninstructed,—repaid the neglect of my domestic duties by a hardened carelessness of my wants and will. After the first transports of grief had subsided, I observed this desertion; and I felt it with all the jealousy of misfortune. Not three days were past since a crowd of obsequious attendants had anticipated my commands; now I could scarcely obtain even the slight service which real necessity required.

The remains of my unfortunate father still lay near me; and, unable to overcome my horror of passing the chamber of death,

I remained entirely secluded in my apartment. The first intruder upon this seclusion was the person who came to seal my father's repositories of papers and money. Having performed his office elsewhere, he entered my apartment with little ceremony ; and, telling me that he understood my father had entrusted me with jewels of value, informed me, that it was necessary to prevent access to them for the present. Accustomed as I was to receive all outward testimonies of respect, the intrusion of a stranger at such a time appeared to me a savage outrage. Ignorant as I was of all the forms of business, his errand assumed the nature of the most insulting suspicion. Had all the jewels of the earth lain at my feet he might have borne them away unresisted by me ; but the proud spirit which grief had bowed almost to the dust, roused itself at once to repel insult ; and, pointing to the casket, I haughtily commanded him to do his office quickly and begone. By this sally of impatience, a few trinkets of value which I might have justly claimed as my own were lost to me, being contained in the

casket which I thus suffered to be appropriated.

Insulted as I thought, and persecuted in my only place of refuge, I became desirous to quit my dismal abode. I imagined, that whatever impropriety there might be in the continuance of Juliet's residence in my desolate habitation, there could be no reason to deter me from taking refuge with my friend;—my gentle, my affectionate friend, who had ever rejoiced in my prosperity, and gloried in my accomplishments, and loved even my faults. Checking the tears which gushed from my eyes at the thought that a father's roof must shelter me no more, I announced my intention to my friend in a short billet. “Come to me, “dearest Juliet,” I said, “come and take me “from this house of misery. I only stipulate, “that you will not ask me to join your bro-“ther's family circle. I wish to see no hu-“man being except yourself,—for who is “there left me to love but you?—Your own “ELLEN PERCY.”

The servant whom I dispatched with this note, brought back for answer, that Miss

Arnold was not at home. I had been accustomed to find every one, but especially Miss Arnold, ever ready to attend my pleasure; and even the easiest lessons of patience were yet new to the spoiled child of prosperity. My little disappointment was aggravated by the captiousness with which the unfortunate watch for instances of coldness and neglect. "Not at home! Ah," thought I, "what pleasure should I have found in idle visiting or amusement, while she was wretched?" Still I never doubted, that the very hour of her return would bring her to welcome and to comfort her desolate friend. I waited impatiently,—listened to every sound; and started at every footstep which echoed through my dreary dwelling. But the cheerless evening closed in, and brought no friend. I passed the hours, now in framing her excuse, now in reproaching her unkindness, till the night was far spent; then laid my weary head upon my pillow, and wept myself to sleep.

The morning came, and I rose early, that I might be ready to accompany my friend without delay. But I took my comfortless

meal alone. Alone I passed the hour in which Juliet and I had been accustomed to plan the pastime of the day. The hour came at which my gay equipage was wont to attend our call. Just then I heard a carriage stop at the door, and my sad heart gave one feeble throb of pleasure; for I doubted not that Juliet was come. It was the hearse which came to bear my father to his grave.—Juliet, and all things but my lost father, were for a time forgotten.

But as the paroxysm of sorrow subsided, I again became sensible to the unkind delay of my friend. My billet had now been so long dispatched without obtaining a reply even of cold civility, that I began to doubt the faithfulness of my messenger. I refused to believe that my note had ever reached Miss Arnold; and I endeavoured to shut my eyes against the indifference which even in that case was implied in her leaving me so long to solitary affliction. I was going once more to summon the bearer of my melancholy billet, that I might renew my inquiries in regard to its delivery, when the long expected answer was at

length brought to me. I impatiently tore it open, anxious to learn what strong necessity had compelled my friend to substitute for her own presence, this colder form of welcome. No welcome, even of the coldest form, was there. With many expressions of condolence, and some even of affection, she informed me of her sorrow "that she could not receive my visit. I must be aware," she said, "that one whose good name was her only dowry, should guard the frail treasure with double care. Grieved as she was to wound me, she was obliged to say, that the publicity of my elopement appeared to her brother an insuperable bar to the continuance of our intimacy. Resistance to his will," she said, "was impossible, even if that will had been less reasonable than, with grief, she confessed it to be. But though she must withhold all outward demonstrations of regard, she would ever remain my very grateful and obedient servant."

I sat motionless as the dead, whilst I decyphered these inhuman words. The ice-bolt had struck me to the heart. For a time

I was stunned by the blow, and a dull stupor overpowered all recollection. Then, suddenly the anguish of abused affection,—the iron fangs of ingratitude,—entered into my soul ; and all that grief, and all that indignation can inflict, burst in bitterness upon the wounded spirit. I gazed wildly on the cruel billet, while, twisting it in the grasp of agony, I wrenched it to atoms ; then, raising to Heaven an eye of blasphemy, I dared to insult the Father of Mercies with a cry for vengeance.

But the transport of passion quickly subsided into despair. I threw myself upon the ground, longing that the earth would open and shelter me from the baseness of mankind. I closed my eyes, and wished in bitterness of soul that it were for ever. Sometimes, as memory recalled some kinder endearment of my ill-requited affection, I would start as beneath the sudden stab of murder ; then bow again my miserable head, and remain in the stillness of the grave. No ray of consolation cheered me. The world, which had so lately appeared bright with pleasure,—the worthy habitation of

beings benevolent and happy, was now involved in the gloom, and peopled with the unsightly shapes of darkness. While my mind glanced towards the selfishness of Lord Frederick, and the treachery of Lady St Edmunds,—while it dwelt upon the desertion of her who, for seven years, had shared my heart and all else that I had to bestow, the human kind appeared to me tainted with the malignity of fiends, and I alone born to be the victim of their craft,—the sport of their cruelty. How often has the same merciless aspersion been cast upon their fellow-creatures by those who, like me, have repelled the friendship of the virtuous? How often, and how unjustly, do they who choose their associate for the hour of sunshine, complain when he shrinks from the bitter blast. Oh that my severe experience could warn unwary beings like myself! Oh that they would learn from my fate, to shun the fellowship of the unprincipled! Even common reason may teach them to despair of awakening real regard in her whom infinite benefits cannot attach,—nor infinite excellence delight,—nor infinite

forgiveness constrain. She wants the very stamina of generous affection ; and is destined to wind her way through all the heartless schemes and cowardly apostacies of selfishness.

From the stupor of despair, I was roused by the entrance of the stranger who had before intruded. In the jealous reserve of an anguish too mighty to be profaned by exposure, I rose from my dejected posture, and, with frozen steadiness, inquired, “ what new indignity I had now to bear ? ” The stranger, awed as it seemed by something in my look and manner, informed me, not without respectful hesitation, that he was commissioned by the creditors to tell me I know not what of forms and rights, of willingness to allow me all reasonable accommodation, and such property as I might justly claim ; and to remind me of the propriety of appointing a friend to watch over my further interests. One word only of the speech was fitted to arrest my attention. “ Friend ! ” I repeated with a smile such as wrings the heart more than floods of womanly tears. “ Any one may do the office of a friend ! ”

Aye, even one of those kindly souls who drove my father to desperation,—who refused him the poor boon of delay, when delay might have retrieved all! Any of them can insult and renounce me.—This is the modern office of a friend, is it not?"

The stranger, gazing on me with astonishment, proceeded to request, that I would name an early day for removing from my present habitation, since the creditors only waited for my departure, to dismiss the servants, and to bring my father's house, with all that it contained, to public sale. He added, that he was commissioned by them to present me with a small sum for my immediate occasions.

To be thus forcibly expelled from the home, where, till now, I could command;—to be offered as an alms a pittance from funds which I had considered as my hereditary right,—to be driven forth to the cold world with all my wounds yet bleeding, stung me as instances of severe injustice and oppression. My spirit, sore with recent injury, writhed under the rude touch. Already goaded almost to frenzy, I told the

stranger, that “had I recollected the rights of his employers, I would not have owed the shelter even of a single night to those whose barbarous exactions had destroyed my father; nor would I ever be indebted to their charity, so long as the humanity of the laws would bestow a little earth to cover me.”

I pulled the bell violently, and gave orders that a hackney-coach should be procured for me. It came almost immediately; and, without uttering another word,—without raising my eyes,—without one expression of feeling, except the convulsive shudderings of my frame, and the cold drops that stood upon my forehead, I passed the apartment where my father perished,—the spot where my mother poured upon me her last blessing,—and cast myself upon the wide world without a friend or a home.

I ordered the carriage to an obscure street in the city; a narrow, dark, and airless lane. I had once in my life been obliged to pass through it, and it had impressed my mind as a scene of all that is dismal in poverty and confinement. This very impression made me now choose it for my abode, and

I felt a strange and dreary satisfaction in adding this consummation to the horrors of my fate. As the carriage proceeded, I became sensible to the extreme disorder of my frame. Noise and motion were torture to nerves already in the highest state of irritation. Fever throbbed in every vein, and red flashes of light seemed to glare before my heavy eyes. A hope stole upon my mind that all was near a close. I felt a gloomy satisfaction in the thought, that surely my death would reach the heart of my false friend,—that surely when she knew that I had found refuge in the grave from calumny and unkindness, she would wish that she had spared me the deadly pang; and would lament that she had doubled the burden which weighed me to the earth.

When the carriage reached the place of its destination, the coachman again applied to me for instructions, and I directed him to stop at any house where lodgings could be obtained. After several ineffectual inquiries, he drew up to the door of a miserable shop, where he was told that a single room was

to be hired. "Would you please to look into my little place yourself, Madam?" said a decent-looking woman, who advanced to meet me. "It is clean, though it be small, and I should be very happy that it would suit."

"Any thing will suit me," answered I. "You, Ma'am!" cried the woman in a tone of extreme surprise; then placing herself just opposite to me, she seemed hesitating whether or not she should allow me to pass. Indeed the contrast of my appearance with the accommodation which I sought, might well have awakened suspicion. My mourning, in the choice of which I had taken no share, was in material the most expensive, and in form of the highest fashion. The wildness of despair was probably impressed on my countenance; and my tall figure, lately so light and so elastic, bent under sickness and dejection. The woman surveyed me with a curiosity, which in better days I would have ill endured; but perceiving me ready to sink to the ground, she relaxed her scrutiny, while she offered me a seat, which I eager-

ly accepted. She then went to the door, upon pretence of desiring the coachman to wait till I should ascertain whether her lodgings were such as I approved, and they entered on a conversation in which I heard my own name repeated. When she returned to me, she poured forth a torrent of words, the meaning of which I was unable to follow, but which seemed intended to apologize for some suspicion. Never imagining that my character could be cause of hesitation, I fancied that the poor woman doubted of my ability to pay for my accommodation; and drawing out my purse, I put into her hands all that remained of an affluence which had so lately been the envy of thousands. "It is but a little," said I, "but it will out-last me."

I now desired to be shewn to my apartment, and laboriously followed my landlady up a steep miserable stair, into a chamber, low, close, and gloomy. In a sort of recess, shaded by a patched curtain of faded chintz, stood a bed, which, only a few days before, no degree of fatigue could have induced me to occupy. Worn out, and heart-

broken as I was, I yet recoiled from it for a moment. "But it matters not," thought I, "I shall not occupy it long;" so I laid myself down without undressing, and desired that I might be left alone.

I was now, indeed, alone. In the wilfulness of desperation, I had myself severed the few and slender ties which might still have bound me to mankind; and I felt a sullen pleasure in the thought that my retreat was inscrutable alike to feeble compassion and to idle curiosity. The widow, whose roof afforded my humble shelter, and her daughter, a sickly, ignorant, but industrious creature, at first persecuted me with attentions; vainly trying to bribe, with such delicacies as they could procure, the appetite which turned from all with the loathing of disease. They urged me to send for my friends, and for medical advice. They tried, though ignorant of my real distemper, to sooth me with words of rude comfort. All was in vain. I seldom looked up, or returned any other answer than a faint gesture of impatience; and, weary of my obstinate silence, they at last desisted from

their assiduities, nor ever intruded on my solitude, except to bring relief to the parching thirst which consumed me.

Day after day passed on in the same dreary quiet. Night, and the twilight of my gloomy habitation succeeded to each other, unnoticed by me. Disease was preying on my constitution,—hopeless and indignant dejection rankled in my mind. My ceaseless brooding over injury and misfortune was only varied by the dreary consolation that all would soon be lost in the forgetfulness of the grave.

And could a rational and immortal creature turn on the grave a hope in which religion had no part? Could a being, formed for hope and for enjoyment, lose all that the earth has to offer, without reaching forward an eager grasp towards joys less transient. When the meteors which I had so fondly pursued were vanished for ever, did no ray from the Fountain of Light descend to cheer my dark dwelling?—No. They who have tasted that the Lord is good, return in their adversity with double eagerness to taste his goodness. But I had lived

without God in my prosperity, and my sorrow was without consolation. In the sunshine of my day I had refused the guiding cloud, and the pillar of fire was withdrawn from my darkness. I had forgotten him who filleth Heaven and earth, and the Heavens and the earth were become one dreary blank to me. The tumult of feeling, indeed, unavoidably subsided ; but it was into a calm,—frozen, stern, and cheerless as the long night-calm of a polar sea.

From the supineness of sickness and despair, I was at last forced to momentary exertion. My landlady renewed her entreaties that I would send for my friends ; enforcing her request by informing me that my little fund was nearly exhausted. Disturbed with her importunity, and careless of providing against difficulties from which I expected soon to escape, I commanded her to desist. But my commands were no longer indisputable. The woman probably fearing, from the continuance of my disorder, that my death might soon involve her in trouble and expence, persisted in her importunity. Finding me obstinately de-

terminated to persevere in concealment, she proceeded to hint not obscurely, that it would be necessary to consider of some means of supply, or to provide myself with another abode. Only a few days were past since an insinuation like this would have driven me indignant from a palace ; but now the depression of sickness was added to that of sorrow, and I only answered, that when I could no longer repay her trouble, I would release her from it. Dissatisfied, however, with an assurance which she foresaw that I might be unable to fulfil, the widow proceeded to inquire whether I retained any property which could be converted into money ; and mentioned a ring which she observed me to wear. Dead as I was to all earthly affection, I firmly refused to part with this ring, for it had been my mother's. I had drawn it a hundred times from her slender hand, and she thought it best employed as a toy for her little Ellen, while yet its quickly shifting rays made its only value to me. "No!" said I, as the woman urged me to dispose of it, "this shall go with me to the grave, in memory

that one heart had human feeling towards me." The landlady, however, venturing a tedious remonstrance against this resolution, the dying fire again gave a momentary flash. "Be silent," I cried. "Speak to me no more till I am penniless; then tell me so at once, and I will that instant leave your house, though I die at the threshold!" Highly offended by this haughty command, the woman immediately retired, leaving me for the rest of that day in total solitude.

An evil was now ready to fall upon me, for which I was wholly unprepared either by experience or reflection. Unaccustomed to approach the abodes of poverty, the very form of want was new to me; and since I had myself been numbered with the poor, my thoughts had chiefly dwelt upon my past misfortunes, or taken refuge from the anticipation of future distress in the prospect of dissolution. But, in spite of my wishes and my prophecies, abstinence, and the strength of my constitution, prevailed over my disorder. My heavy eyes were this night visited by a deep and refreshing

sleep, from which I awoke not till a mid-day-sun glanced through the smoke a dull ray upon the chimney crags that bounded my horizon. I looked up with a murmur of regret that I was restored to consciousness. "Why," thought I, "must the flaring light revisit those to whom it brings no comfort?" and I closed my eyes in thankless impatience of my prolonged existence. Oh where is the *human* physician, whose patience would endure to have his every prescription questioned, and vilified, and rejected? whose pitying hand would offer again and again the medicine which in scorn we dash from our lips?—No! Such forbearance dwells with one being alone; and such perverseness we reserve for the infallible physician.

I presently became sensible that my fever had abated. With a deep feeling of disappointment I perceived that death had eluded my desires; and that I must return to the thorny and perplexing path where the serpent lurked to sting, and tigers prowled for prey. While my thoughts were thus engaged, a footstep crossed my chamber; but,

lost in my gloomy reverie, I suffered it, ere I raised my eyes, to approach close to my bed. I was roused by a cry of strong and mingled feeling. "Miss Mortimer!" I exclaimed; but she could not speak. She threw herself upon my bed, and wept aloud. The voice of true affection for a moment touched my heart; but I remembered that the words of kindness had soothed only to deceive; and stern recollection of my wrongs steeled me against better thoughts.

"Why are you come hither, Miss Mortimer?" said I, coldly withdrawing myself from her arms.

"Unkind Ellen!" returned my weeping friend, "could I know that you were in sorrow and not seek you? May I not comfort, —or, if that cannot be, may I not mourn with you!"

"I do not mourn—I want no comfort—Leave me."

"Oh say not so, dearest child. You are not forbidden to feel. Let us weep together under the chastisement, and trust together that there is mercy in it."

"Mercy! no. I have been dashed with-

out pity to the earth, and there will I lie till it open to receive me."

Miss Mortimer gazed on me in sorrowful amazement; then, wringing her hands as in sudden anguish, "Oh Heaven!" she cried, is this my Ellen!—is this the joyous spirit that brought cheerfulness wherever it came,—is this the face that was bright with life and pleasure? Loveliest, dearest, how hast thou lost the comfort which belongs even to the lowest of mankind,—the hope which is offered even to the worst of sinners!"

"Leave me, Miss Mortimer!" I cried, impatient of the self-reproach which her sorrow awakened in my breast. "I wish only to die in peace. Must even this be denied me?"

"Ellen, my beloved Ellen, is this what you call peace? Oh Thou who alone canst, deign to visit this troubled soul with the peace of thy children." Miss Mortimer turned from me, and ceased to speak; but I saw her wasted hand lifted as in prayer, and her sobs attested the fervency of the petition. After a short silence, making a

visible effort to compose herself, she again addressed me. "Do not ask me to leave you, Ellen," said she. "I came hither, resolved not to return without you. If you are too weak to-day for our little journey, I will nurse you here. Nay, you must not forbid me. I will sit by you as still as death. Or, make an effort, my love, to reach home with me, and I will not intrude on you for a minute. You shall not even be urged to join my solitary meals. It will be comfort enough for me to feel that you are near."

I could not be wholly insensible to an invitation so affectionate; but I struggled against my better self, and pronounced a hasty and peremptory refusal. Miss Mortimer looked deeply grieved and disappointed; but hers was that truly Christian spirit whose kindness no ingratitude could discourage, whose meekness no perverseness could provoke. She might have checked the untoward plant in its summer pride; but the lightning had scathed it, and it was become sacred in her eyes. Sparing the irritability of the wounded spirit, she

forbore to fret it by further urging her request. She rather endeavoured to sooth me by every expression of tenderness and respect. She at last submitted so far to my wayward humour, as to quit my apartment, aware perhaps that the spirit which roused itself against opposition, might yield to solitary reflection. The voice of kindness, which I had expected never more to hear, stirred in my breast a milder nature; and, as my eye followed the feeble step of Miss Mortimer, and read her wasted countenance, my heart smote me for my resistance to her love. "She has risen from a sick-bed to seek me," thought I; "me, renounced as I have been by all mankind, —bereft as I am of all that allured the perfidious. Surely *this* is not treachery."

My reverie was suddenly interrupted by poor Fido, who made good his entrance as Miss Mortimer left the room, and instantly began to express, as he could, his recognition of his altered mistress. The sight of him awakened at once a thousand recollections. It recalled to my mind my former petulant treatment of my mother's

friend, her invariable patience and affection, and the remorse excited by our separation. My mother herself rose to my view, such as she was when Fido and I had gamboled together by her side,—such as she was when sinking in untimely decay. I felt again the caress which memory shall ever hold dear and holy. I saw again the ominous flush brighten her sunken cheek ; knelt once more at her feet to pray that we might meet again ; and heard once more the melancholy cry that spoke the pang of a last farewell. The stubborn spirit failed. I threw my arms round my mother's poor old favourite, and melted into tears. These tears were the first which I had shed since the unkindness of my altered friend had turned my gentler affections into gall ;—and let those who would know the real luxury of grief, turn from the stern anguish of a proud heart, to the mild regrets which follow those who are gone beyond the reach of our gratitude and our love.

Miss Mortimer did not leave me long alone. She returned to bring me refresh-

ments, better suited to my past habits and present weakness than to her own very limited finances. As she entered, I hastily concealed my tears ; but, when her accents of heartfelt affection mingled in my soul with the recollections which were already there, the claim of my mother's friend grew irresistible. A half confession of my late ingratitude rose to my lips ; but that to which Ellen, the favoured child of fortune, might have condescended as an instance of graceful candour, seemed an act of meanness in Ellen fallen and dependent. I pressed Miss Mortimer's hand between mine. " My best, my only friend ! " said I ; and Miss Mortimer asked no more. It was sufficient for the generous heart that its kindness was at last felt, and accepted.

CHAP. XVI.

—Fruit ————— some harsh, 'tis true,
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested; grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth;
Insipid else, and sure to be despised.

COWPER.

THE news of my father's misfortune no sooner reached Miss Mortimer's retirement, than she made an exertion beyond her strength, that she might visit and comfort me. At my father's house, she learnt that I was gone, no one knew whither; but the conveyance which I had chosen enabled her at last to trace my retreat, and she lost not a moment in following me thither. There, with all the tenderness of love, and all the perseverance of duty, she watched over my returning health; nor ever quit-

ted me by night or by day, till I was able to accompany her home.

It was on a golden summer morning that we together left my dreary lurking-place. The sun shone forth as brightly as on the last day that I had visited Miss Mortimer's abode; the trees were in yet fuller foliage; and the hues of spring were ripening to the richer tints of autumn. The river flashed as gaily in the beam, and the vessels veered as proudly to the breeze. My friend sought to cheer my mind by calling my attention to the bright and busy scene. But the smile which I called up to answer her cares, came not from the heart. Cold and undelighted I turned from the view. "To what end," thought I, "should this prison-house be so adorned? this den of the wretched and the base!" So dismal a change had a few weeks wrought upon this goodly frame of things to me. But thus it ever fares with those who refuse to contemplate the world with the eye of reason and of religion. In the day of prosperity, this foreign land is their chosen rest, for which they willingly forget their father's

house ; but when the hours of darkness come, they refuse to find in it even accommodations fitted for the pilgrim “ that tarries but a night.”—

When we had reached the cottage, and Miss Mortimer, with every testimony of affection, had welcomed me home, she led me to the apartment which was thenceforth to be called my own. It was the gayest in my friend’s simple mansion. Its green walls, snowy curtains, and light furniture, were models of neatness and order ; and though the jessamine had been lately pruned from the casement to enlarge my view, enough still remained to adorn the projecting thatch with a little starry wreath.

On one side of my window were placed some shelves containing a few volumes of history, and the best works of our British essayists and poets ; on the other, was a chest of drawers, in which I found all the more useful part of my own wardrobe, secured to me by the considerate attention of Miss Mortimer. My friend rigidly performed her promise of leaving my time wholly at my own command. As soon as

she had established me in my apartment, she resigned it solely to me ; nor ever reminded me, by officious attentions, that I was a guest rather than an inmate. She told me the hours at which her meals were punctually served, giving me to understand, that when I did not choose to join them, no warning or apology was necessary ; since, if I did not appear in the family-room, I should be waited upon in my own. These arrangements being made, she advised me to repose myself after the fatigue of my journey, and left me alone. Wearied out by an exertion to which my strength was yet scarcely equal, I laid myself on a bed more inviting than the last which I had pressed, and soon dropt asleep.

The evening was closing, when I was awakened by a strain of music, so soft, so low, that it seemed at first like a dream of the songs of spirits. I listened, and distinguished the sounds of the evening hymn. It was sung by Miss Mortimer ; and never did humble praise,—never did filial gratitude,—find a voice more suited to their expression. The touching sweetness of her

notes, heightened by the stillness of the hour, roused an attention little used of late to fix on outward things. "These are the sounds of thankfulness," thought I. "I saw her this morning thank God, as if from the heart, for the light of a new day; and now, having been spent in deeds of kindness, it is closed as it began in an act of thanksgiving. What does she possess above all women, to call forth such gratitude? She is poor, lonely, neglected. She knows that she has obtained but a short reprieve from a disease which will waste away her life in lingering torture. Good Heaven! What is there in all this to cause that prevailing temper of her mind; that principle, as it would appear, of all her actions? She must have been born with this happy turn of thought. And, besides, she has never known a better fate;—blest, that poverty and solitude have kept her ignorant of the treachery and selfishness of man!"

The strain had ceased, and my thoughts returned to my own melancholy fate. To escape from tormenting recollection, or rather in the mere restlessness of pain, I open-

ed a book which lay upon my table. It was my mother's Bible. The first page was inscribed with her name, and the date of my birth, written with her own hand. Below, my baptism was recorded in the following words :

“ This eleventh of January 1775, I dedicated my dearest child to God. May he accept and purify the offering, though it be with fire ! ”

As I read these lines, the half prophetic words of my mother's parting blessing flashed on my recollection. “ Oh my mother ! ” I cried, “ couldst thou have foreseen how bitter would be my ‘ chastisement,’ — couldst thou have known, that the ‘ fire’ would consume all, would not thy love have framed a far different prayer ? Yes ! for thou hadst a fellow-feeling in every suffering, and how much above all in mine ! ”

I proceeded to look for some further traces of a hand so dear. The book opened of itself at a passage to which a natural feeling had often led the parent who was soon to forget even her child in the unconsciousness of the grave ; and a slight mark in the margin di-

rected my eye to this sentence: "Can a mother forget her sucking babe, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will not I forget thee."

These words had often been read in my hearing, when my wandering mind scarcely affixed a meaning to them, or when their touching condescension was lost upon the proud child of prosperity. But now their coincidence with the previous current of my thoughts seized at once my whole attention. I started as if some strange and new discovery had burst upon my understanding. Again I read the passage, and with a care which I had never before bestowed on any part of the book which contains it. "Is this," I inquired, "an expression of the divine concern in each individual of human kind?—No. It seems merely a national promise. Yet, my mother has regarded it in another light, else why has she marked it so carefully?"

It was in vain that I debated this question with myself. Such was my miserable ignorance of all which it most behoved me to

know, that I never thought of explaining the letter of the Scriptures by resorting to their spirit. My habitual propensities resisting every pious impression, my mind revolted from the belief, that parental love had adjusted every circumstance of a lot which I accounted so severe as mine. To admit this was virtually to confess that I had need of correction; that I had, to use Miss Mortimer's words, "already reached that state when mercy itself assumes the form of punishment." Yet the soothing beauty of the sentiment, the natural yearning of the friendless after an Almighty friend, made me turn to the same passage again and again, till the darkness closed in, and lulled me to a deep and solemn reverie.

"Does the Great Spirit," thought I, "indeed watch over us? Does He work all the changes of this changeful world? Does He rule with ceaseless vigilance,—with irresistible control, whatever can affect my destiny? Can this be true! If it be even possible, by what strange infatuation has it been banished from my thoughts till now? But it cannot be so. A man's own actions

often mould his destiny ; and if his actions be compelled by an extraneous energy, he is no more than a mere machine. The very idea is absurd.” And thus, to escape from a sense of my own past insanity, I entered a labyrinth where human reason might stray for ever, “ and find no end, in wandering mazes lost.” But the subject, perplexed as it was to my darkened understanding, had seized upon my whole mind ; and sleep fled my pillow, whilst in spite of myself the question again and again recurred ; “ If I be at the mercy of a resistless power, why have I utterly neglected to propitiate this mighty Arbitrator ; if the success of every purpose even possibly depended upon his will, why was that will forgotten in all my purposes ?”

As soon as it was day I arose, and, with the eagerness of one who would escape from suspense, I resorted to the book which had so lately arrested my regard. I no longer glanced over its pages in careless haste ; for it offered my only present lights upon the questions, interesting by their novelty as well as by their importance—whe-

ther I had been guilty of the worse than childish improvidence, which, in attending to trifles, overlooks the capital circumstance ? or whether the Creator, having dismissed us like orphans into a fatherless world, is regardless of our improvement, and deaf to our cry ? My impatience of doubt made me forget for a time, that the very fact which confers upon Scripture its authority, supposes a divine interference in human concerns. The great truth, however, shone forth in every page. All spoke of a vigilant witness, a universal, a ceaseless energy. Nor was this all. I could scarcely open the book without finding somewhat applicable to my own character or situation ; I was therefore no longer obliged to compel my attention, as to the concerns of a stranger ; it was powerfully attracted by interests peculiarly my own. The study, indeed, was often painful, but yet I returned to it, as the heir to the deed which is to make him rich or a beggar.

My search, however, produced nothing to elate. I read of benefits which I had forgotten,—of duties which I had neglect-

ed,—of threatenings which I had despised. The “first and great commandment,” directed every affection of my soul to Him who had scarcely occupied even the least of my thoughts. The most glorious examples were proposed to my imitation, and my heart sunk when I compared them with myself. A temper of universal forbearance, habits of diligent benevolence, were made the infallible marks of a character which I had no right to claim. The happy few were represented as entering with difficulty, and treading with perseverance, the “strait and narrow way,” which not even self-deceit could persuade me that I had found. That self-denial, which was enjoined to all as an unremitting habit, was new to me almost even in name. The “lovers of pleasure,” among whom I had been avowedly enrolled, were ranked, by my new guide, with “traitors and blasphemers.” The pride which, if I considered it at all as an error, I accounted the “glorious fault” of noble minds, was reprobated as an impious absurdity. The anguish of repentance, —the raptures of piety,—the “full assur-

ance of hope," were poured forth; but, with the restless anxiety of him who obtains an imperfect glimpse of the secret upon which his all depends, I perceived, that their language was to me the language of a foreign land.

By degrees, something of my real self was opened to my sight. The view was terrible; but, once seen, I vainly endeavoured to avert my eye. At midnight, and in the blaze of day, in the midst of every employment, in defiance of every effort, my offences stood before me. With the sense of guilt, came the fear before which the boldest spirit fails. I saw the decree already executed which took from me the talent which I had buried in the earth; but the stroke which had deprived me of all, seemed only a prelude to that more awful sentence which consigns the unprofitable servant to "outer darkness." As one who starts from sleep beneath the uplifted sword,—as he to whom the lightning's flash reveals the precipice,—as the mother waked by the struggles of her half-smothered babe,—so I—but what material

images of horror can shadow forth the terrors of him who feels that he is by his own act undone! In an overwhelming sense of my folly and my danger, I often sunk into the attitude of supplication; but I had now a meaning to unfold not to be expressed in the few formal phrases which I had been accustomed to hurry over. I saw that I had need of mercy which I had not deserved, and which I had no words to ask. How little do they know of repentance who propose to repay with it, at their own "convenient season," the pleasures which they are at all hazards determined to seize!

Meanwhile, though my misfortunes could not be banished from my mind, they no longer held their sullen reign alone. New interests had awakened in my breast, new fears, new regrets. I felt that there is an evil greater than the loss of fame, of fortune, or of friends; that there is a pang compared with which sorrow is pleasure. This anguish I endured alone. The proud spirit could pour into no human ear the language of its humiliation and its dread. I suffered Miss Mortimer to attribute to

grief the dejection which at times over-powered me; to impatience of deprivation, the anxious disquiet of one who is seeking rest, and finding none. Yet I no longer shunned her society. I sought relief in the converse of a person rich in the knowledge in which I was wanting, impressed with the only subjects which could interest me now. Miss Mortimer was precisely the companion best calculated to be useful to me. She never willingly oppressed me with a sense of her superiority,—never upbraided my cold reception of doctrines which I was not yet fitted to receive,—never expressed surprise at my hesitation, nor impatience with my prejudices,—never aggravated my sense of the danger of my state, nor boasted of the security of her own; but answered my questions in terms direct and perspicuous, opposed my doubts and prejudices with meek reason, represented the condition of the worst of mankind as admitting of hope,—that of the best, as implying warfare.

From the first month of my residence with Miss Mortimer I may date a new

era of my existence. My mind had received a new impulse, and new views had opened to me of my actions, my situation, and my prospects. An important step had been made towards a change in my character. But still it was only a step. The tendencies of nature, strengthened by the habits of seventeen years, remained to be overcome, and this was not the work of a month, or a year. I was not, however, of a temper long to endure the sense of helpless misery. Encouraged by the promises which are made to the repentant, and guided now by the example which I had once overlooked or ridiculed, I resolved to associate myself, as much as possible, in Miss Mortimer's acts of devotion and of charity. I joined in her family worship,—I visited her pensioners,—and industriously assisted her in working for the poor; an employment to which she punctually devoted part of her time. Little did I then suspect how much the value of the same action was varied by our different motives. She laboured to please a Father,—I to propitiate a hard master. She was

humbly offering a token of gratitude,—I was poorly toiling for a hire.

It was now that I began to feel the effects of my former habits of life. While my feelings were in a state of strong excitement, they held the place of the stimulants to which I had been accustomed; and I should have turned in disgust from the trivial interests which had formerly engaged me. But whenever my mind settled into its more natural state, I became sensible of a vacancy,—a wearisome craving for an undefined something to rouse and interest me. The great truths indeed which I had lately discovered, often supplied this want, and I had only to turn my newly acquired powers of sight towards my own character, to be awakened into strong emotion. But, compared with my new standards, my own heart offered a prospect so little inviting, that I turned from it as often as I dared, endeavouring to “lay the flattering unc-
tion to my soul,” by wilfully mistaking the resolution to be virtuous for virtue itself.

The activity of my mind had hitherto been so unhappily directed, that it now re-

volted from every impulse, except such as were either pleasurable or of overwhelming force. Besides, although nothing be more sublime than a life of charity and self-denial in the abstract, nothing is less so in the detail. I was unused to difficulty, and therefore submitted with impatience to difficulties which my own inexperience rendered more numerous. Poverty I had known only as she is exhibited in the graceful draperies of tragedy and romance, therefore I met her real form in all its squalor and loathsomeness, with more, I fear, of disgust, than of pity. My imaginary poor had all been innocent and grateful. Short experience in realities corrected this belief; and when I found among the real poor the vices common to mankind, added to those which peculiarly belong to a state of dependence,—when I found them selfish, proud, and sensual, as well as cunning and improvident,—I almost forgot that alms were never meant as a tribute to the virtues of man, and that it is absurd to pretend compassion for the bodily necessities of our fellow-creature, while we exer-

cise none towards the more deplorable wants of his mind. Not knowing, however, what spirit I was of, I called my impatience of their defects a virtuous indignation; and witnessed, with something like resentment, the moderation of Miss Mortimer, who always viewed mental debasement as others do bodily decrepitude, with an averseness which inclined her to withdraw her eye, but with a pity which stretched forth her hand to help. Yet when I beheld the ignorance, the miseries, the crimes of beings in whom I had now, in some degree, learnt to reverence the character of immortality, how did I lament, that, with respect to them I had hitherto lived in vain! How did I reproach myself, that, while thousands of sensitive and accountable creatures were daily within the sphere of my influence, that influence had served only to deepen, with additional shades, the blackness of human misery and of human guilt!

Accident served to heighten this self-upbraiding. One day when Miss Mortimer, with the assistance of my arm, was walking round her garden, she observed a meagre

barefooted little girl, who, reaching her sallow hand through the bars of the wicket, asked alms in a strong Caledonian accent. My friend, who never dismissed any supplicant unheard, patiently inquired into a tale which was rendered almost unintelligible, by the uncouth dialect and national bashfulness of the narrator. All that we could understand from the child was, that she was starving, because her father was ill, and her mother prevented from working, by attendance upon an infant who was dying of the small-pox. Miss Mortimer, who always conscientiously endeavoured to ascertain that the alms which she subtracted from her own humble comforts were not squandered in profligacy, accepted of my offer to examine into the truth of this story, and I accompanied the child to the abode of her parents.

After the longest walk which I had ever taken, my conductress ushered me into a low dark apartment in the meanest part of Greenwich. Till my eye was accommodated to the obscurity, I could very imperfectly distinguish the objects which surround-

ed me; and, for some minutes after leaving the gladdening air of Heaven, I could scarcely breathe the vapour stagnant in the abode of disease and wretchedness. The little light, which entered through a window half filled with boards, fell upon a miserable pallet, where lay the emaciated figure of a man; his face ghastly wan, till the exertion of a hollow cough flushed it with unnatural red; and his eye glittering with the melancholy brightness which indicates hopeless consumption.

Upon a low stool, close by the expiring embers, sat a woman, vainly trying to still the hoarse cry of an infant. On my entrance, she started up to offer me the only seat which her apartment contained; and the poor Scotchman, with national courtesy to a superior, would have risen to receive me,—but he was unable to move without help. His wife, that she might be at liberty to assist him, called upon the little girl to take charge of her brother. Startled at seeing an infant committed to such care, I thoughtlessly offered my services, and held out my arms for the child. The

mother, evidently pleased with what she seemed to regard as condescension, and not aware that the being whom she was fondly caressing could be an object of disgust to others, held the child towards me; but at the first glance I recoiled, with an exclamation of horror, from a creature who scarcely retained a trace of human likeness. That dreadful plague, which the most fortunate of discoveries now promises to banish from the earth, had disguised, or rather concealed every feature; and, deprived of light, of nourishment, and rest, the sufferer scarcely retained the power to express its misery in a hoarse and smothered wailing. The poor woman, sensibly hurt by my expression of disgust, shed tears, while she reminded me of the evanescent nature of beauty, and enumerated all the charms of which a few days had deprived her boy. I had wounded where I came to heal; and all my address could scarcely atone for an error, that increased the difficulties which my errand already found in the decent reserve of spirits unsubdued to

beggary, and a dialect which I could very imperfectly comprehend.

What I at length learnt of the story of these poor people, may be told in a few words: The man was a gardener, who had been allured from his country by the demand in England for Scotchmen of his trade. Unable to procure immediate employment, he and his family had suffered much difficulty; till, encouraged by the name of a countryman, they had applied to Mr Maitland. By his interest, the man had obtained the situation of under-gardener in Mr Percy's villa at Richmond.

I started at the name of my father, but having been often deceived, I was become cautious; and, without betraying myself, asked whether they had ever seen Miss Percy. The woman answered that they had not, having entered on their service the same day that their master's family removed to town. The evil influence of Miss Percy, however, had blasted all their hopes and comforts. She had given peremptory orders that some delicate exotics should be forced into flower to adorn an en-

tertainment. Poor Campbell, deputed to take care of them, watched them all night in the hot-house, then walked two miles to his lodging through a thick drift of snow,—breathed ever afterwards with pain,—struggled against disease,—wrought hard in the sharp mornings and chilly evenings of spring ; and, when my father could no longer repay his services, was dismissed to die, unheeded by a mistress equally selfish in the indulgence of her sorrow as in the thoughtlessness of her prosperity.

As I listened to this tale, I found it confirmed by circumstances which admitted not of doubt. While I looked on the death-struck figure of poor Campbell, saw the misery that surrounded me, and felt that it was *my* work, my situation was more pitiable than that of any mortal, except him who can see that he has done irreparable injury yet see it without a pang. When I recovered utterance, I inquired whether Campbell had any medical assistance ?—a needless question ; he had not wherewith to purchase food, much less medicine.—“ But if I were once able, Madam,” said

he, “ to earn what would pay our passage home, I should soon be well,—the air in Scotland is so pure, and breathes so pleasantly !”—“ You shall get home, cost what it will,” cried I, and instantly delivered the whole contents of my purse, without considering that it could scarcely be called mine, and that it could be replenished only from the scanty store of her whose generosity would fain, if possible, have made me forget that I was no longer the rich Miss Percy.

Ignorant as I was of Greenwich and its inhabitants, I next undertook to find medical advice. By inquiring at a shop, I obtained the address of a Mr Sidney, to whom I immediately repaired. He was a young man of a very prepossessing appearance, tall and handsome enough for a hero of romance. Will it be believed, that, in spite of the humbling sense of guilt which in that hour was strong upon me, my besetting weakness made me observe with pleasure the surprise and admiration with which my appearance seemed to fill this stranger? But vanity, though powerful in

me, was no longer unresisted. I pulled my bonnet over my face, nor once again looked up while I conducted Sidney to the abode of his new patient.

I cannot express the horror which I felt, when, after examining the situation of the poor man, Sidney informed me, in a whisper, that no aid could save his life. I turned faint, and, to save myself from sinking to the ground, retreated to the door for air. At that moment, I overheard Sidney ask, "Who is that angel?" and the term, applied to one who was little less than a murderer, sharpened the stab of conscience. I hastily turned to proclaim my name, and submit myself to the execrations of this injured family; but I wanted courage for the confession, and the words died upon my lips.

The disfigured infant next engaged Sidney's attention. He discovered that the mother had, according to what I have since found to be the custom of her country, aggravated the dreadful disease, by loading her unhappy child with all the clothes she could command, and carefully defending

him from the fresh air. She had even deprived herself of food, that she might procure ardent spirits, which she compelled the hapless being to swallow, to drive, as she expressed it, “the small-pox from his heart.” Yet this poor woman, so ignorant of the treatment of the most common disorder, possessed, as I afterwards found, a knowledge of the principles of religion, and an acquaintance with the scope of its doctrines and precepts, which, at that time, appeared to me very wonderful in a person of her rank. They are, however, less surprising to me since I became a denizen of Scotland.

But to close a tale, on which its strong impression on my mind has perhaps made me dwell too long, the boy, by means of better treatment, recovered; his father’s disease was beyond the reach of human skill. One day, while I was in the act of holding a cordial to his lips, he fell back, and, with a momentary struggle, expired. The little ingenious works which I had been taught at school, were, for the first time, employed by me to a useful purpose, when his

widow and children were enabled, by the sale of them, to procure a passage to Scotland.

I cannot express the effect which this incident had upon my mind. A new load of guilt seemed to oppress me. I perceived that actions and habits might have tendencies unsuspected by the agent; that the influence of a fault, venial perhaps in the eyes of the transgressor, might reach the character and fate of those who are not within the compass of his thoughts; and therefore, that the real evil of sin could be known only to Him, by whom effects that as yet exist not are traced through their eternal course. Thus a fearful addition of “secret sins” was made to all those with which conscience could distinctly charge me; and my examinations of my past conduct were like the descent into a dismal cavern, where every step discloses some terrifying sight, and all that is imperfectly distinguished in the gloom is imagined to be still more appalling.

It is true, I had resolved upon a better course of life, but my resolutions were very

partially kept ; nor, had it been otherwise, could present submission atone for past disobedience. Even my best actions, when weighed in the right balance, were “found wanting,” and rather in need of forgiveness than deserving of reward. My best efforts seemed but the sacrifice of the ignorant Indian, who vows to his god an ingot of gold, and then gilds a worthless offering to defraud him. Nor had they in truth one vestige of real worth, void as they still were of that which gives a value to things of small account. It is the fire from heaven which distinguishes the acceptable sacrifice.

Who that had seen me under the depression which these convictions occasioned, could have imagined that I had entered on “ways of pleasantness,” and “paths of peace?” Anxious and fearful, seeking rest and finding none, because remaining pride prevented me from seeking it where alone it was to be found, I struggled hard to escape the convictions which were forced upon my conscience. I opposed to the truths of religion a hundred objections

which had never before occurred to me, only because the subject was new to my thoughts ; and I recollect an infinity of the silly jests and ridiculous associations, by which unhappy sinners try to hide from themselves the dignity of that which they are predetermined to despise. I remember with amazement Miss Mortimer's patience in replying to the oft-refuted objection,— oft refuted I say, because I am certain that far more ingenuity than I can boast would be necessary to invent upon this subject a cavil which has not been answered again and again. Far from desiring me however to rely upon her authority, she recommended to me such books as she thought likely to secure my rational assent to the truth, carefully reminding me, at the same time, that they could do no more ; and that mere rational assent fell far short of that faith to which such mighty effects are ascribed. The direct means of obtaining a gift, she said, was to ask it ; and faith she considered as a gift.

“ To what purpose,” said I to her one day after I had laboured through Butler’s

Analogy and Macknight's Truth of the Gospel History—"to what purpose should I perplex myself with these books, when you own that some of the best Christians you have ever known were persons who had never thought of reasoning upon the evidences of their faith?" "Because, my dear," answered Miss Mortimer, "the exercise of your highest natural faculties upon your religion is calculated to fix it in your mind, and endear it to your affections. It is true, that piety as pure and as efficient as any I ever knew, I have witnessed in persons who had no leisure, and perhaps no capacity for reasoning themselves into a conviction of the historical truth of Christianity. The Author of faith is not bound to any particular method of bestowing his gift. He may, and I believe often does, compensate for the means which he withholds; but this gives no ground to suppose that he will make up for those which we neglect."

Through Miss Mortimer's persuasion, I steadily persevered in this line of study; and, if my understanding possesses any de-

gree of soundness or vigour, it is to be attributed to this discipline. My education, if the word signify learning what is afterwards to be useful, was now properly beginning ; and every day added something to my very slender stock of information. My friend, who was herself no mean proficient in general literature, encouraged me to devote many of my leisure hours to books of instruction and harmless entertainment ; and our evenings were commonly enlivened by reading history, travels, or criticism. Leisure, like other treasures, is best husbanded when it is least abundant ; and it was no longer entirely at my command. I still retained enough of the spirit of Ellen Percy, to hold dependence in rather more than Christian scorn,—yet to be ashamed of openly contributing to my own subsistence. In how many shapes does our ruling passion assail us ! If we resist it in the form of vice, it will even put on the semblance of virtue. I firmly believed at that time, that a virtuous motive alone induced me to escape, by means of my own labour, from all necessity for applying to the funds of Miss Morti-

mer; and I forgot to inquire into the reason why my work was always privately done, and privately disposed of.

The manufacture of a variety of ingenious trifles now become useful by ministering to my own wants and those of others,—the share I took in Miss Mortimer's charitable employments,—hours of devotion and serious study, reading, and often writing abstracts of what I read,—left no portion of my time for weariness. But had I been deprived of all bodily employment, the very condition of my mind precluded ennui. I was full of one concern of overwhelming importance. At one time, the truth shone upon me, gladdening me to rapture with its brightness; at another, error darkened my sinking soul, and I was eager in my search for light. Alas! our infirmity loads with many a cloud the dawning even of that true light which “ shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” The natural warmth of my temper, and my long-confirmed habit of yielding to all its impulses, often hurried me into little superstitious austerities, needless scruples, and vehement

disputes, which, had they been exposed to common eyes, would have drawn upon me the derision of some, and the suspicion of others ; but fortunately Miss Mortimer had few visitors, and my foibles were little seen, except by one who could discover errors in religious judgment, without imputing them either to fanaticism or hypocrisy.

My altercations, for discourse in which passion is permitted to mingle cannot deserve the name of argument, were chiefly carried on with Sidney, who, from the time of his assistance to the Campbells, had become a frequent guest at Miss Mortimer's. His dispositions were amiable, his character unblemished ; but his opinions upon some lesser points of doctrine differed widely from mine. This he happened one day accidentally to betray ; and I, with the rashness which inclines us to fancy all lately-discovered truths to be of equal importance, combated what I considered as his fatal heresy. Sidney, with great good-humour, rather excited me to speak, perhaps for the same reason as he taught his dog to quarrel with him for his glove. Miss Mortimer

never took part in our disputation, not even by a look. "How can you" said I to her one day when he had just left us, "suffer such opinions to be advanced without contradiction?"

"I am afraid of losing my temper," answered she with an arch smile, "and that I am sure is forbidden in terms more explicit than Mr Sidney's heresy."

"And would you have me," cried I, instantly sensible of the implied reproof, "seem to approve what I know to be false."

"No my dear," returned Miss Mortimer; "but perhaps you might disapprove, without disputing; and I think it is not obscurely hinted by the highest authority, that the modest example of a Christian woman is likely to be more convincing than her arguments. Besides, though we are most zealous in our new opinions, we are most steady in our old ones; therefore, I believe, that, upon consideration, you will see it best to place a guard upon your steadiness for the present, and to husband your zeal for a time when it will be more likely to fail."

When I was cool, I perceived that my friend was in the right; and, by a strong effort, I thenceforth forbore my disputes with Sidney; to which forbearance it probably was owing, that he soon after became my declared admirer.

CHAP. XVII.

Shift not thy colour at the sound of death,
For death _____
Seems not a blank to me, a loss of all
Those fond sensations,—those enchanting dreams,
Which cheat a toiling world from day to day,
And form the whole of happiness it knows.
Death is to me perfection, glory, triumph !

THOMSON.

SIDNEY's overtures cost me some hesitation. They were unquestionably disinterested ; and they were made with a plainness rather prepossessing to one who had so lately experienced the hollowness of more flowery profession. Nothing could be objected to his person, manners, or reputation. Miss Mortimer's ill health rendered the protection I enjoyed more than precarious. Honourable guardianship, and plain sufficiency, offered me a tempting al-

ternative to labour and dependence. But I was not in love ; and as I had no inclination to marry, I had leisure to see the folly of entering upon peculiar and difficult duties, while I was yet a novice in those which are binding upon all mankind. Sidney had, indeed, by that natural and involuntary hypocrisy which assumes for the time the sentiments of a beloved object, convinced me that he was of a religious turn of mind ; and from his avowed heresies I made no doubt of being able to reclaim him ; but he wanted a certain masculine dignity of character, which had, I scarcely knew how, become a *sine quâ non* in my matrimonial views. These things considered, I decided against Sidney ; and it so happened, that this decision was formed in an hour after I had received a long and friendly letter from Mr Maitland.

Now this letter did not contain one word of Maitland's former avowal, nor one insinuation of affection, which might not, with equal propriety, have been expressed by my grandmother. But it spoke a strong feeling for my misfortunes,—a kindly interest in my

welfare ; it represented the duties and the advantages of my new condition ; and reminded me, that, in so far as independence is attainable by man, it belongs to every one who can limit his desires to that which can be purchased by his labour.

“ I see no advantage in being married,” said I, rousing myself from a reverie into which I had fallen after the third reading of my letter. “ Mr Maitland can advise me as well as any husband could ; and in ten or a dozen years hence, I might make myself very useful to him too. I might manage his household, and amuse him ; and there could be nothing absurd in that after we were both so old.”

“ Not quite old enough for that sort of life, I am afraid,” said Miss Mortimer, smiling. “ If, indeed, Mr Maitland were to marry, the woman of his choice would probably be an invaluable protector to you.”

“ Oh he won’t marry. I am sure he will not ; and I wonder, Miss Mortimer, what makes you so anxious to dispose of all

your favourites? For my part, I hate to hear of people being married."

I thought there was meaning in Miss Mortimer's half-suppressed smile; but she did not raise her eyes, and only answered good-humouredly, that, "indeed, all her matrimonial plans for the last twenty years, had been for others."

Some expressions of curiosity on my part, now drew from Miss Mortimer a narrative of her uneventful life; which, as it is connected with the little I knew of Mr Maitland's, and with the story of my mother's early days, I shall give in my own words:

Miss Mortimer and my mother were hereditary friends. Their fathers fought side by side,—their mothers became widows together.—Together the surviving parents retired to quiet neglect, and mutually devoted themselves to the duties which still remained for them. Those which fell to the lot of Mrs Warburton, were the more difficult; for, while a moderate patrimony placed the only child of her friend above dependence, it was her task to reconcile to poverty and

toil the high spirit of a youth of genius; and to arm for the rude encounters of the world, a being to whom gentleness made them terrible, to whom beauty increased their danger.

The splendid progress of young Warburton's education, had been the boast of his teachers,—the delight of his parents,—the pride, the only pride of his sister's heart. But his father's death blasted the fair prospect. The widow's pittance could not afford to her son the means of instruction; and from the pursuit of knowledge,—the pleasures of success,—and the hopes of distinction, poor Warburton unwillingly turned to earn, by the toil of the day, the support which was to fit him for the toil of the morrow. Disgusted and desponding, he yet refrained from aggravating by complaint the sorrows of his mother and his sister. To Miss Mortimer, the companion of his childhood, he mourned his disappointed ambition, and was heard with sympathy; he deplored the failure of hopes more interesting, and won something more than pity.

In the counting-room, which was the

scene of his cheerless labour, he found, however, a friend; and Maitland, though nearly seven years younger than he, gained first his respect, and then his affection. Maitland, while thus in age a boy, was a tall, vigorous, hardy mountaineer. His nerves had been braced by toilsome exercise and inclement skies; his strong mind had gained power under a discipline which allowed no other rest than change of employment. He had left his native land, and renounced his paternal home, in compliance with the will of his parents, and the caprice of his uncle, who, upon these conditions, offered him the reversion of a splendid affluence. His country he remembered with the virtuous partiality which so strongly distinguishes, and so well becomes her children. Of his paternal home he seldom spoke. Silent and shy, he escaped the smile of vulgar scorn, which would have avenged the confession that the bribes of fortune poorly repaid the endearments of brethren and friends; that all the charms of spectacle and song could not please like the rude verse which first taught him the legends of a gallant ances-

try ;—that all the treasures of art he would have gladly exchanged for permission to bend once more from the precipice which no foot but his had ever dared to climb, or linger once more in the valley whose freshness had rewarded his first infant adventure. Curiosity is feeble in the busy and the gay. No one asked, no one heard the story of Maitland's youth ; and Warburton alone knew the full cost of a sacrifice too great and too painful to be made a theme with strangers. Maitland the elder, retaining his national prejudice in favour of a liberal education, permitted his nephew to pursue and enlarge his studies under the inspection of a man of sense and learning, designing to send him at a proper age to the university. Meanwhile he required him to spend a few hours daily in attendance upon his future profession.

In Maitland, young as he was, Warburton found a companion who could task his mind to its full strength. In classical acquirements, Maitland was already little inferior to his friend ; and, if he had less imagination, he had more acuteness and sagaci-

ty. Enduring in quiet scorn the derision which his provincial accent excited in the sharers of his humbler lessons, he was pleased to find in Warburton manners more congenial with his own habits. The young scholars had subjects of mutual interest in which the others could not sympathize. The few hours which Maitland spent daily in the counting-room, alone broke the dull monotony of Warburton's labour ; and Warburton alone listened with the enthusiasm which unlocks the heart, to Maitland's descriptions of his native scenes, of torrents roaring from the precipice, and woods dishevelled by the storm. They became friends, and Warburton confided his lost hopes, and bewailed the untimely close of his attainments. The harder mind of Maitland suggested a remedy for the evil. He advised his friend to earn by severer toil, and to save by stricter parsimony, a fund which might in time afford the advantage of a college life. From that hour he himself gave the example of the toil and the parsimony which he recommended. He abridged his rest, he renounced his recreations for

the drudgery of translating for a bookseller. The allowance which he had been accustomed to spend, he hoarded with a miser's care. He was invited to share the pleasures of his companions, and resolutely refused. He listened to hints of his penurious temper, and deigned no other answer than a smile. But, when he was better known, few were so unprincipled as to find in him the subject of a jest, and fewer still so daring as to betray their scorn; for Maitland possessed, even then, qualities which ensure command,—integrity which no bribe could warp,—decision which feared no difficulty,—penetration which admitted of no disguise. After two years of silent perseverance, he presented to his friend the fruits of his self-denial, and was more than compensated when Warburton accompanied him to Oxford.

It was a few months before the completion of this arrangement, that Mr Percy, taking shelter from a shower in a parish church at the hour of morning prayer, was captivated by the beauty, the modesty, and the devotion of Frances Warburton. He

followed her home, obtained an introduction, and soon made proposals, with little form and much liberality. Frances shrank from her new lover, for a difference of thirty years in their ages was the least point of their dissimilarity. The lover, sensible of no disparity, but such as a settlement might counterbalance, enlarged his offers. He would have scorned to let any expectation outgo his liberality. He promised competence for life to her mother, and Frances faltered in her refusal. Mrs Warburton did not use direct persuasion, but she sometimes lamented to her daughter that poverty should mar the promise of her Edmund's genius. "Had he but one friend," said she, "even one, to encourage or assist him, he would yet be the glory of my old age." "He shall have a friend," returned the weeping Frances,—and she married Mr Percy.

But the sacrifice was unavailing. Young Warburton was not destined to need such aid as riches can give, nor to attain such advancement as riches can buy. His constitution, already broken by confinement,

was unequal to his more willing exertions; yet, insensible to his danger, he pursued his enticing bane; rejected the friendly warning which told him that he was labouring his life away; and was one morning found dead in his study, the essay lying before him which was that day to have introduced him to fame and fortune.

Miss Mortimer and her friend suffering together, became the more endeared to each other. My mother indeed had found a new object of interest, and she transferred a part, perhaps too large a part, of her widowed affections to her child. Miss Mortimer raised her's to a better world, and recalled them to this fleeting scene no more.

Maitland, defended from the dangers of a university by steady principle and habits of application, passed safely, even at Oxford, the perilous years between boyhood and majority; then turned his attention to studies more peculiarly belonging to his intended profession. He visited the greatest commercial cities upon the Continent; conversed with the most enlightened of

their merchants ; and, far from limiting his inquiries to the mere means of gain, he embraced in his comprehensive mind all the mutual relations and mutual benefits of trading nations. At the age of twenty-five, he returned home, to take a principal share in the direction of one of the greatest mercantile houses in Britain. Before he was thirty, the death of his uncle had put him in possession of a noble independence, and left him chief partner in a concern which promised to realize the wildest dreams of avarice. But the love of wealth had no place in Maitland's soul. A small part of his princely revenue sufficed for one whose habits were frugal, whose pleasures were simple, whose tastes were domestic. The remainder stole forth in many a channel ; like unseen rills, betraying its course only by the riches which it brought.

Awake as he ever was to the claims of justice and humanity, it was not personal interest that could shield the slave trade from the reprobation of Maitland. He conquered his retiring nature, that, in the senate of his country, he might lend his

testimony against this foulest of her crimes ; and when that senate stilled the general cry with a poor promise of distant reform, he blushed for England and for human kind. Somewhat of the same honest shame he felt at the recollection that he was himself the proprietor of many hundreds of his fellow-creatures ; and when he found that his public exertions in their cause did not avail, he braved the danger of a pestilient climate to mitigate the evil which he could not cure, and to gain, by personal investigation, knowledge which might yet be useful in better times.

Such was Maitland. I dwell upon his character with mingled pleasure and regret,—pleasure, perhaps not untainted with womanly vanity ; regret, that, when I might have shared the labours, the virtues, the love of this noble soul, a senseless vanity made me cold to his affection,—a mean coquetry wrecked me in his esteem ! I might once indeed have bound him to me for ever ; but it was now plain that he had cast off his inglorious shackles. Although I answered his letter, he shewed no intention

of continuing our correspondence, and to Miss Mortimer he noticed me only as a common friend; nor did he ever mention his return to Britain as likely to take place before the lapse of many years.

Warned by the consequences of my past folly, and beginning now to act, however imperfectly, by the only rule which will ever lead us to uniform justice, I had no sooner formed my resolution in regard to Sidney, than I gave him an opportunity of learning my sentiments. I will not deny that this cost me an effort; for I was afraid of losing a pleasant acquaintance; and besides, as the young gentleman was sentimentally in love, his little anxieties and tremors were really, in spite of myself, amusing. But vanity, though unconquerably rooted in me by nature and habit, was no longer overlooked as a venial error. I struggled against it as a part of that selfish, earth-born spirit, which was altogether inconsistent with my new profession, and which, except at the moment of temptation, seemed now too despicable to bias the actions even of an infant. Sidney was a

man of sense; and therefore, by a very few efforts of firmness and common honesty, I made him my friend, while I convinced him that he could be nothing more. Nor did the explanation occasion even a temporary suspension of our intercourse. Unfortunately, his professional visits were become necessary to Miss Mortimer; and with me he had long before started a topic, amply compensating that which I had interdicted. He had an excellent chemical library, and a tolerable apparatus. By means of these, and a degree of patience not to be expected from any man but a lover, he contrived to initiate me into the first rudiments of a science, which has no detriment except its unbounded power of enticing those who pursue it. By informing me what I might read with advantage, he saved me the time which I might have lost in making the discovery for myself; and though he had not always leisure to watch my progress, he could direct me what to attempt. After all, it must be confessed, that my attainments in chemistry were contemptible; but even this feeble

beginning of a habit of patient inquiry was invaluable. Besides, in the course of my experiments, I made a discovery infinitely more important to me than that of latent heat or galvanism, namely, that the prospect of exhibition is not necessary to the interest of study.

Nothing is more important in its issue, nothing more dull in the relation, than a life of quiet and regular employment. A narrative of my first year's residence with Miss Mortimer would be a mere detail of feelings and reflections, mixed with confessions of a thousand instances of rashness, impatience, and pride. My original blemishes were still conspicuous enough to establish my identity ; yet one momentous change had taken place, for those blemishes were no longer unobserved or wilful. I had become more afraid of erring than of seeing my error ; more anxious to escape from my faults than from my conscience. Not that her rebukes were become more gentle. On the contrary, an unutterable sense of depravity and ingratitude was added to my self-accusings ; for, in receiving the forgive-

ness of a father, I had awakened to the feelings of a child, and in every act of disobedience I sinned against all the affections of my soul. Let it not be objected to religion, if my judgment was disproportioned to the force of sentiments like these ; and if, though no devotion can be extravagant in its degree, mine was sometimes indiscreet in its expression. The fault lay in my education, not in my faith. Christianity justly claims for her own the “ spirit of a sound mind,” but that spirit dwells most frequently with those whose devout feelings have been accustomed to find their chief vent in virtuous actions.

My walk happened one day to lead near a dissenting chapel ; and the eagerness to hear, which characterizes recent converts, made me join the multitude who thronged the entrance. “ The truth,” thought I, “ is despised by the gay and the giddy, but to me it shall be welcome, come whence it will.” Was there nothing pharisaical in the temper of this welcome ? In spite, however, of the liberality for which I was applauding myself, my expectations were in-

fluenced by my early prejudices, and I presupposed the preacher zealous indeed, but loud, stern, and inelegant. Surprise, therefore, added force to my impressions. The unadorned pulpit was occupied by a youth not yet in his prime, nor destined, as it seemed, ever to reach that period. The bloom of youth had given place in his countenance to a wandering glow, that came and went with the mind's or the body's fever. His bright blue eyes, now cast down in humility, now flashing with rapturous hope, had never shone with less gentle fires. His manner had the mild seriousness of entreaty,—his composition the careless vigour of genius,—or rather the eloquence of one, who, feeling the essential glory of truth, thinks not of decking her with tinsel.

Reasoning must convince the understanding, and a power which neither human reasoning nor human eloquence can boast, must bend the will to goodness; but that which comes from the heart will, for a time at least, reach the heart. Mine was strongly moved. The novel simplicity of

form, the fervour of extemporary prayer, the zeal of the youthful teacher, his faithful descriptions of a debasement which I strongly felt, his unqualifying application of the only medicine which can minister to this mortal disease, roused me at once to all the energy of passion. I abhorred the coldness of my ordinary convictions; and, compared with what I now felt, disparaged the impression of regular instruction. I forgot, or I had yet to learn, that the genuine spirit of the gospel is described as the “spirit of peace,” not of rapture; that the Heavenly weapon is not characterized as dazzling us with its lustre, but as “bringing into captivity every thought.” Feeling an increase of heat, I rashly inferred that I had received an accession of light, and immediately resolved to join the favoured congregation of a pastor so useful.

My recollection of the prejudice which confounds in one undistinguishing charge of fanaticism many thousands of virtuous and sober-minded persons, rather strengthened that resolution; for fire and faggot are

not the only species of persecution which arms our natural feelings on the side of the suffering cause. I gloried in the thought of sharing contempt for conscience sake, and longed with more, it must be owned, of zeal, than of humility, to enter upon this minor martyrdom.

That very evening I announced my purpose to my friend, in a tone of premature triumph. Miss Mortimer was so habitually averse to contradicting, that I was obliged to interpret into dissent the grave silence in which she received my communication. Dissent I might have borne, but not such dissent as barred all disputation ; and I entered on a warm defence of my sentiments, as if they had been attacked. Miss Mortimer waited the subsiding of that part of my warmth which belonged to mere temper, then gave a mild but firm opinion. “ It had been allowed,” she told me, “ by an author of equal candour and acuteness, that ‘ there is perhaps no establishment so corrupt as not to make the bulk of mankind better than they would be without it.’ Our countenance, therefore,” she said,

“ to the establishment of the country in which we lived, was a debt we owed to society, unless, indeed, the higher duty which we owed to God were outraged by the doctrines of the National Church. As for mere form, it had always,” she said, “ appeared to her utterly immaterial, except as it served to express or to strengthen devotion; therefore it seemed unnecessary to forsake a ritual which had been found to answer these purposes. If the ordinances, as administered by our church, were less efficacious to me than they had been to others, she would wish me to examine, whether this were not owing to some unobserved error in my manner of using them. But if, after diligent attention, humble self-examination, and earnest prayer for guidance, I continued to find the national worship unsuitable to my particular case, she might regret, but she could not condemn my secession, since I should then be not only privileged, but bound to forsake her communion.”

The time was not long past, since even this mild resistance would have only confirmed me in a favourite purpose; but I

was becoming less confident in my own judgment ; and Miss Mortimer's consistent worth had established an influence over me beyond even that to which my obligations entitled her. Though her natural abilities were merely respectable, her opinions upon every point of duty had such precision and good sense, that, without being aware of it, I leant upon her judgment of right and wrong, as naturally as the infant trusts his first unsteady steps to his mother's sustaining hand. She prevailed upon me to pause ere I forsook the forms in which my fathers had worshipped ; and though her own principle has since connected me with a church of simpler government and ritual, I have never seen reason to repent of the delay:

And now, deprived as I was of all the baubles which I had once imagined necessary to comfort, almost to existence, I was nearer to happiness than I had ever been while in the full enjoyment of all that pleasure, wealth, and flattery can bestow ; for I now possessed all the materials of such happiness as this state of trial admits,—good health, constant employment, the neces-

saries of this life, and the steady hope of a better. And let the lover of pleasure, the slave of Mainmon, the sage who renounces the light of Heaven for the spark which himself has kindled, smile in scorn whilst I avow, that at times felt rapture, compared with which their highest triumph of success is tame. I can bear the smile, for I know that they are compelled to mingle it with a sigh ; that they envy the creature whom they affect to scorn ; and wish—vainly wish, that they could choose the better part.

The bitter drop which is found in every cup, was infused into mine by the increasing illness of Miss Mortimer ; and by a strong suspicion, that poverty aggravated to her the evils of disease. This latter circumstance, however, was conjectural ; for Miss Mortimer, though confidingly open with me upon every other subject, was here most guarded. From the restraint visibly laid upon inclinations which I knew to be liberal in the extreme,—from my friend's obstinate refusal to indulge in any of the little luxuries which sickness and debility

require,—from many trifles which cannot evade the eye of an inmate, I began to form conjectures which I soon accidentally discovered to be but too well founded. A gentleman happened to make a visit of business to Miss Mortimer one day when she was too much indisposed to receive him; and he incautiously committed to me a message for her, by which I discovered, that her whole patrimony had been involved in the ruin of my father; that, except the income of the current year, which she had fortunately rescued a few weeks before the wreck, she had lost all; that, while she made exertions beyond her strength to seek and to comfort me, while she soothed my sullen despair, she was herself shrinking before the gaunt aspect of poverty; and that, while she contrived for me indulgences which she denied to herself, her generous soul abhorred to divulge what might have rendered my feeling of dependence more painful.

When the certainty of all this burst upon me, I felt as if I had been in some sort responsible for the injury which my father

had inflicted ; and, overwhelmed with a sense of most undeserved obligation, I almost sunk to the ground. The moment I recovered myself, I flew to my friend, and with floods of tears, and the most passionate expressions of gratitude, I protested that I would no longer be a burden upon her generosity, and besought her to consider of some situation in which I might earn my subsistence. But Miss Mortimer resisted my proposal upon grounds which I felt it impossible to dispute. “ I cannot spare you yet, my dear child,” said she. “ I have been assured, that in a very few months you must be at liberty ; but you will not leave me yet,— you will not leave me to die alone.”

This was the first intimation which I had received of the inevitable fate of one whose gentle virtues and unwearied kindness had centered in herself all my widowed affections ; and it wholly overpowered the fortitude which not an hour before I had thought invincible. I hurried from human sight, while I mingled with bitter cries a passionate entreaty, that I might suffer any thing rather than the loss of my only friend. We

often ask in folly: but we are answered in wisdom. The decree was gone forth, and no selfish entreaties availed to detain the saint from her reward. When the first emotions were past, I saw, and confessed, that a petition such as mine, clothed in whatever language, was wanting in the very nature of prayer, which has the promise of obtaining what we need, not of extorting what we desire.

In the present situation of my friend, it was impossible for me to forsake her; yet I could not endure to feel myself a burden upon the little wreck which the misfortunes or imprudence of my family had left her. Hour after hour I pondered the means of making my labour answer to my subsistence. But here my early habits were doubly against me. Accustomed to seek in trifling pastimes relaxation from employment scarcely less trifling, perseverance in mere manual industry was to me almost impossible. Habituated to confound the needful with the desirable, I had no idea how large a proportion of what we think necessary to the decencies of our station,

belongs solely to the wants of our fancy. My highest notion of economy in dress went no farther than the relinquishing of ornament; therefore, all my little works of ingenuity were barely sufficient to supply my own wardrobe, and another channel of expense which I had of late learnt to think at least as necessary. I saw no means, therefore, of escaping my dependence upon Miss Mortimer. Yet it made me miserable to think, that, for my sake, she must deny herself the necessaries of decaying life. My heart gave a bound as my eye chanced to be caught by the sparkle of my mother's ring, and I recollect that its value might relieve my unwilling pressure upon my friend. But when I had looked at it till a thousand kindly recollections rose to my mind, my courage failed, and I thought it impossible to part with the memorial of my first and fondest attachment. Again my obligations to Miss Mortimer,—the rights of my mother's friend,—the dread of subtracting from the few comforts of a life which was so soon to close, upbraided my reluctance to sacrifice a selfish feeling; but

a casuistry, which has often aided me against disagreeable duty, made me judge it best to act deliberately, and thus to defer indefinitely what I could neither willingly do, nor peacefully leave undone.

My decision, however, was hastened by one of those accidents which, I am ashamed to say, have determined half the actions of my life. The next morning, as I was reading to Miss Mortimer in her ground parlour, a woman came to the window offering for sale a basket of beautiful fruit. Fruit had been recommended as a medicine to my friend. I fancied too, though perhaps it was only fancy, that she looked wistfully at it; and when she turned away without buying any, the scalding tears rushed to my eyes. Hastily producing the money which I had privately received for some painted screens, I heaped all the finest fruit before Miss Mortimer; and when, in spite of her mild remonstrances, I had laid out almost my whole fortune, I was seized with a sudden impatience to visit London, and thither I immediately went, promising to return before night.

I began my journey with a heavy heart. A stage coach, the only conveyance suited to my circumstances, was quite new to me, and I shrank with some alarm from companions, much like those usually to be met with in such vehicles, vulgar, prying, and communicative. Finding, however, that they offered me no incivility, I reassured myself, and began to consider what price I was likely to obtain for my ring, and how I might best present my offering to Miss Mortimer. The first of these points I settled more agreeably to my wishes than to truth ; the second was still undetermined when the coach stopped. Then I first recollect, that, with my usual inconsiderateness, I had not left myself the means of hiring a conveyance through the town. I had therefore no choice but to walk alone in some of the most crowded streets of the city.

And now I had some cause for the alarm that seized me, for I was more than once boldly accosted ; and, ere I reached the shop where I intended to offer my ring, I was so thoroughly discomposed, that I entered

without observing an equipage of the De Burghs at the door.

The shop was full of gay company ; but one figure alone fixed my attention. It was that of my heartless friend. I recoiled like one who treads upon a serpent. My first impulse was to fly ; but ere I had time to retreat, a deadly sickness arrested my steps, and I stood motionless and crouching towards the earth, as if struck by the power of the basilisk. A person belonging to the shop, who came to inquire my commands, seeing me, I suppose, ready to sink, offered me a chair, upon which I unconsciously dropped, still unable to withdraw my gaze from my apostate friend. Presently I almost started from my seat as her eye met mine. Her deepening colour alone told that she recognized me, for she instantly turned away.

Indignation now began to displace the stupor which had seized me. "Shall I let this unfeeling creature see," thought I, "that she has power to move me thus ? Or shall I tamely slink away as if it were I who should dread the glance of reproach !—as

if it were I who had stabbed the heart that trusted me!" My breast swelling with pain, pride, and, resentment, I arose, and walking across the shop with steps as stately as if I had been about to purchase all the splendours it contained, I began to transact the business which brought me thither. My attention, however, was so much preoccupied, that I was scarcely sensible of surprise when the jeweller named five and twenty pounds as the price of my ring, a sum less than one third of what I had expected.

I now perceived that Miss Arnold accompanied Lady Maria de Burgh. They talked familiarly together, and I was probably their subject; for Lady Maria stared full upon me, though her companion did not venture another glance towards the spot where I stood. Not satisfied with her arrogant scrutiny, Lady Maria, as if curious to know whether I were the buyer or the seller, made some pretence for approaching close to me, though without any sign of recognition. I had a hundred times abjured my enmity to Lady Maria. I had wept over it as ungrateful, unchristian. In

cool-blooded solitude I had vowed a hundred times, that, having been forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents, I would never more wrangle for trifles with my fellow-servants. But when I was fretted with the insults of strangers, and sore with the unkindness of my early friend, when perhaps my pride was wounded by the circumstances in which she was about to detect me, her Ladyship's little impertinence, attacking me on the weak side, stirred at once the gall of my temper. Suspending a bargain which, indeed, I did not wish her to witness, "Pray," said I to the shopman, "attend in the first place to that Lady's business, if indeed she has any except to pry into mine."

Lady Maria, who knew by experience that she was no match for me in a war of words, muttered something, and retreated, tossing her pretty head with disdain. Eager to be gone, I closed with the offer which had been made for my ring, and after delays which I thought almost endless, had received my money, and was about to depart, when Miss Arnold, who was in close conversation with her companion, in a distant

part of the shop, suddenly advanced, as if with an intention to accost me. I was breathless with agitation and resentment. "I will be cool, scornfully cool," thought I; "I will shew her that I can forget all my long-tried affection, and remember only—" I turned away, and remembrance wrung tears from me. But the formal effrontery with which she addressed me restored in a moment my fortitude and my indignation. She excused herself for not speaking to me sooner, by asserting that she "really had not observed me."

Scorning the paltry falsehood, "That is no wonder, Miss Arnold," answered I, "for I am much lessened since you saw me last."

I was moving away, but Miss Arnold, who had probably received her instructions, detained me. "Do stay a few minutes," said she coaxingly, "I have a great deal to say to you. Lady Maria will be here for an hour, for she and Glendower are choosing their wedding finery, so if you lodge any way hereabouts, I can take the carriage and set you down."

The days of my credulous inadvertence were past, and, at once perceiving the drift of this proposal, I answered with ineffable scorn, “ If you or Lady Maria have any curiosity to know my present situation, you may be gratified without hazarding your reputation by being seen with a runaway. I live with Miss Mortimer.”

I think Miss Arnold had the grace to blush, but I did not wait to examine. I hurried away, threw myself into the first hackney-coach I could find, and returned home, exhausted and dispirited. I was dissatisfied with myself. The time had been when I should have thought the impertinence of a rival, the cool effrontery and paltry cunning of Miss Arnold, sufficient justification of any degree of resentment or contempt ; but now I needed only the removal of temptation, to remind me how unsuitable were scorn and anger to the circumstances of one who was herself so undeservedly, so lately, and still so imperfectly reclaimed. I firmly resolved, that if ever I should again meet Miss Arnold or her new protectress, I should treat them

with that cool guarded courtesy which is the unalienable right of all human kind. The strength of this resolution was not immediately tried, for all my resentments had time to subside before I again saw or heard of my false friend.

Indeed, my seclusion now became more complete than ever, for Miss Mortimer's malady, the increase of which she had hitherto endeavoured to conceal from me, suddenly became so severe as to baffle all disguise. Yet it was no expression of impatience which betrayed her. For four months I scarcely quitted her bed-side, by day or by night. During this long protracted season of suffering, neither cry nor groan escaped her. Often have I wiped the big drops of agony from her forehead ; but she never complained. She was more than patient ; the settled temper of her mind was thankfulness. The decay of its prison-house seemed only to give the spirit a foretaste of freedom. Timid by nature, beyond the usual fearfulness of her sex, she yet endured pain, not with the iron contumacy of a savage, but with the submission

of filial love. The approach of death she watched more in the spirit of the conqueror than the victim ; yet she expressed her willingness to linger on till suffering should have extinguished every tendency to self-will, and helplessness should have destroyed every vestige of pride. Her desire was granted. Her trials brought with them an infallible token that they came from a Father's hand ; for her character, excellent as it had seemed, was exalted by suffering ; and that which in life was lovely, was in death sublime.

At last, the great work was finished. Her education for eternity was completed ; and, from the severe lessons of this land of discipline, she was called to the boundless improvement, the intuitive knowledge, the glorious employments of her Father's house. One morning, after more than ordinary suffering, I saw her suddenly relieved from pain ; and, grasping at a deceitful hope, I looked forward to no less than years of her prolonged life. But she was not so deceived. With pity she beheld my shortsighted rejoicing. " Dear child," said she,

“ must that sanguine spirit cheat thee to the end? Think not now of wishing for my life,—pray rather that my death may profit thee.” She paused for a moment, and then added emphatically, “ Do you not every morning pray for a blessing on the events which *that day* will produce?”

Long as I had anticipated this sentence, it was more than I could bear. “ This day! This very day!” I cried. “ It cannot,—it shall not be.—It is sinful in you thus to limit your days! This very day! Oh, I will not believe it;” and I threw myself upon my friend’s death-bed in an agony which belied my words.

She gently reproved my vehemence. “ Ellen, my dear Ellen, my friend, my comforter, how can you lament my release? Your affection has been a blessing in my time of trial,—will you let it disturb the hour of my rejoicing? Had I been necessary to you my child, I hope I could have wished, for your sake, to linger here,—but ‘ one thing,’ only one, ‘ is needful.’ That one you have received,—and when the

light of heaven has risen upon you, can you mourn that one feeble spark is darkened?"

The physicians, whom I sent in haste to summon, came only to confirm her prediction. She forced them to number the hours she had to live, and heard with a placid smile that the morning's sun would rise in vain for her. She bade farewell to them and to her attendants, bestowing, with her own hand, some small memorial upon each; then gently dismissed all, except myself and the hereditary servant who had grown old with her, and who now watched the close of a life which she had witnessed from its beginning. "I saw her baptism," said the faithful creature to me, the big tears rolling down her furrowed face, "and now — but it is as the Lord will."

By my dying friend's own desire, she was visited by the clergyman upon whose ministry she had attended; and with him she conversed with her accustomed serenity, directing his attention to some of her own poor, who were likely to become more

destitute by her loss; and affectionately commanding to his care the unfortunate girl whom her death was to cast once more friendless upon the world.

While he read to her the office for the sick, she listened with the steady attention of a mind in its full strength. When he came to the words “Thou hast been my hope from my youth!” “Yes!” said she; “He has indeed been my hope from my youth. He blessed the prayers and the labours of my parents, so that I never remember a time when I could rest in any other trust; yet, till now, I never knew that hope in its full strength and brightness.” Then laying her hand, now chill with the damps of death, upon my arm, she said with great energy, “Ellen, I trust I can triumphantly appeal to you whether our blessed faith brings not comfort unspeakable,—but how strong, how suitable, how glorious its consolations are, you will never know, till, like me, you are bereft of all others, and, like me, find them sufficient, when all others fail.”

Towards evening, her voice became fee-

ble, she breathed with pain, and all her bodily powers seemed to decay. But that which was Heaven-born was imperishable. The love of God and man remained unshaken. Complaining that her mind was grown too feeble to form a connected prayer, she bade me repeat to her the triumphant strains in which David exults in the care of the Good Shepherd. When I had ended, "Yes," said she, "He knows how to comfort me in the dark valley, for he has trod it before me,—and what am I that I should die amidst the cares of kind friends, and He amidst the taunts of his enemies! Ellen, your mind is entire,—thank Him, thank Him fervently for me, that I am mercifully dealt with."

As I knelt down to obey her, she laid her hand upon my head as if to bless me. At first, she repeated after me the expressions which pleased her, afterwards single words, then, after a long interval, the name of Him in whom she trusted. When I rose from my knees, her eyes were closed,—the hand which had been lifted in prayer was

sunk upon her breast. A smile of triumph lingered on her face. It was the beam of a sun that had set. The saint had entered into rest.

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CHAP. XVIII.

— She hath ta'en farewell.—

Upon her hearth the fire is dead,
The smoke in air hath vanished.
The last long lingering look is given ;
The shuddering start ! the inward groan !
And the pilgrim on her way is gone.

JOHN WILSON.

As I tore myself from the remains of my friend, I felt that I had nothing more to lose. My soul, which had so obstinately clung to the earth, had no longer whereon to fix her hold. Words cannot describe the moment when, having assisted in the last sad office of woman, I was led from the chamber of death to wander through my desolate dwelling. Man cannot utter what I felt when I left the grave of my friend and turned me to the solitary wilderness again. Yet even the agony of my grief

had no likeness to the stern horror which had once overwhelmed my soul. I was in sorrow indeed, but not in despair,—I was lonely, but not forsaken. My interests in this scene of things were shaken,—were changed,—but not annihilated; for the world can never be a desert while gladdened by the sensible presence of its Maker; nor life be a blank to one who acts for eternity. The mere effort to become resigned, forbade the listlessness of despair; and even partial success gave some relief from uniformity of anguish. But I was new to the lesson of resignation, and as yet faintly imbued with that spirit which accepts with filial thankfulness the chastisements of a father. The accents of submission were choked by those of sorrow; and when I tried to say “Thy will be done,” I could only bow my head and weep.

It was not till the first bitterness of grief was past, that I recollect all the cause I had to grieve. My first feeling of desolation was scarcely heightened by the reflection, that I was once more cast upon the world without refuge or means of sub-

sistence. A few days after the death of my friend, her legal heir arrived to assert his rights ; and the will by which she had intended to secure in her cottage a shelter for her old servant and myself, was too informal to entitle us to resist his more valid claim. The will was written with Miss Mortimer's own hand, and expressed with all the touching solemnity of a last address to the object of strong affection. To resist it, seemed to me an instance of almost impious hardness of heart ; and when the heir, fretted perhaps by finding his inheritance fall so far below his expectations, gave me notice, that I must either purchase the remainder of the lease, or, within a month, seek another habitation, I resolved that I would owe nothing to the forbearance of a being so callous,—that I would instantly resign to him whatever the relentless law made his own.

But whither could I go ? I was as friendless as the first outcast that was driven forth a wanderer. I had no claim of gratitude, relationship, or intimacy on any living being. The few friends of my mother who

had visited me after my return from school, I had neglected as persons of a character too grave, and of habits too retiring for the circle in which I desired to move. In that circle, a few months had sufficed to procure me some hundreds of acquaintances ; ages probably would not have furnished me with one friend. My own labour, therefore, was now become my only means of obtaining shelter or subsistence ; and, foreign as the effort was to all my habits, the struggle must be made. But how was I to direct my attempts ? What channel had the customs of society left open to the industry of woman ? The only one which seemed within my reach was the tuition of youth ; and I felt myself less dependent when I recollect- ed my thorough knowledge of music, and my acquaintance with other arts of idleness. When, indeed, I considered how small a part of the education of a rational and accountable being I was after all fitted to undertake, I shrank from the awful responsibility of the charge, and I fear pride was still more averse to the task than principle ;

but there seemed no alternative, and my plan was fixed.

To enter on a state of dependence amidst scenes which had witnessed my better fortunes,—to be recognized in a condition little removed from servitude by those who had seen me at the summit of prosperity,—to meet scorn in the glances of once envious rivals,—and pity in the eye of once rejected lovers, would have furnished exercise for more humility than I had yet attained. Almost the first resolution which I formed on the subject was, that the scene of my labours should be far distant from London. Other circumstances in the situation which I was about to seek, I determined not to weigh too fastidiously; for though the most ambiguous praise from a person of fashion is often thought sufficient introduction to the most momentous of trusts, I had seen enough of the world to know, that it would be difficult to obtain the office of a teacher upon the mere strength of my acquaintance with what I pretended to teach; and I was resolved to owe no recommendation to any of those summer

friends, by whom I seemed now utterly neglected and forgotten.

To the clergyman, whose compassion my dying friend had claimed for me, I explained my situation and my purpose. He shewed me every kindness which genuine benevolence could dictate,—offered to write in my behalf to a married sister settled in a remote part of the kingdom,—and invited me to reside in his family till I found a preferable situation.

Meanwhile, a most unexpected occurrence placed me beyond the reach of immediate want. Among Miss Mortimer's papers was found a sealed packet addressed to me. It enclosed a bank bill for £200; and in the envelope these words were written :

“ My Dear Ellen, use the enclosed sum
“ without scruple and without inquiry, for
“ it is your own. Mine it never was, and
“ none else has any claim upon it. It
“ came into my possession within this hour,
“ from whence you may never know; but
“ I will conceal it till all is over, lest you

“ squander upon the dying that which the living will need.

“ E. MORTIMER.”

I instantly conjectured that this sum was the gift of Mr Maitland. “ And yet,” said I to myself, “ he has no interest in me now, except such as he would take in any one whom he thought unfortunate. Perhaps—If I could see his letters to Miss Mortimer—But I am sure his sentiments are of no consequence to me,—only, if this money be really his, I ought undoubtedly to restore it; and this from no impulse of pride certainly. —Is there not a wide difference between humility and meanness?” Persuading myself, that it was quite necessary to ascertain the true owner of the money, I obtained permission to examine the correspondence which my friend had left behind. I found it to contain many letters from Mr Maitland, but only one in which I was mentioned, otherwise than in the words of common courtesy; and of that one, the tantalizing caution of my friend had spared only the following fragment :

“ I will not be dazzled by your pictures
“ of your young friend’s improvement. I
“ consider, that while you are drawing
“ them she is before you, turning up her
“ transparent cheek as she used to do, and
“ looking up in your face half sideways
“ through her long black eyelashes, with
“ that air of arch ingenuousness that must
“ tempt you to give her credit for every
“ virtue. I will not allow your partiality
“ to blind me nor yourself to the probabi-
“ lity, that all her apparent progress is not
“ real. Ellen has warm passions and a vi-
“ vid imagination ; therefore it is impossi-
“ ble that she should fail to receive a strong
“ impression from events which have chang-
“ ed the whole colour of her fate. But the
“ passions and the imagination are not the
“ seat of religion. Besides, admitting that
“ she has received a new principle of ac-
“ tion, we must recollect, that pride and
“ self-indulgence are not to be cured in an
“ hour ; nor can the opposite virtues spring
“ without culture. The principle which
“ guides our habits may be suddenly chang-
“ ed, and perhaps no means is more fre-

“ quently employed for this change than
“ severe calamity ; but our habits them-
“ selves are of slow growth ; slowly the
“ seeds of evil are eradicated ; laboriously
“ the good ground is prepared ; watered
“ with the dews of Heaven, the good seed,
“ in progress that baffles human observa-
“ tion, advances from the feeble germ that
“ scarcely rears itself from the dust, to the
“ mature plant which bringeth forth an
“ hundred fold. So you see, my good
“ friend, I am determined to be wise, to
“ read your encomiums with allowance,
“ and, having painfully escaped from dan-
“ ger, to be cautious how I tempt it again.

“ The execution of my present plans
“ must detain me in exile for years to come,
“ otherwise I could dream of a time when,
“ having vanquished the power of that
“ strange girl over my happiness, I might
“ venture to watch over hers, perhaps be
“ permitted to aid her improvement. I
“ think I had some slight influence over
“ her. If it were fit that a social being
“ should waste feeling and affection in

“ dreams, I could dream delightfully of
“ —.”

“ Of what ? ” thought I, when I reached this provoking interruption,—and I too began to dream. “ Does he still love me ? ” I asked myself. Can the grave wise Mr Maitland still remember the rosy cheek and the long black eye-lashes ? Can he do no more than fly from his bane, but long after it still ? ” In spite of the regulations under which I had laid my heart,—in spite of the sorrow which weighed heavily upon it, the spirit of Ellen Percy fluttered in it for a moment. “ But why should I smile at his weakness, though I am myself exempt from that strange whim called love. Yes, certainly, for ever exempt. I have not withstood Maitland to be won by the monkey tricks and mawkish common-place of ordinary men. ‘ Power over his happiness ! ’ But for this strange coldness of heart, and my own unpardonable folly, I might have made him happy.—But that is all over now.—Now I can only wish and pray for his happiness. And if it be necessary to

his peace that he forget me, I will pray that he may. No one heart on earth will then, indeed, beat warm to me ; but the earth and all that it contains will soon pass away."—And I shed some tears, either over the transitory nature of all things here below, or over some reflection not quite so well defined.

Having perused the mutilated letter more than once, and finding my curiosity rather stimulated than gratified by the perusal, I certainly did not relax in the diligence with which I examined my friend's repositories. But I could not discover one line from Mr Maitland of a later date than six months before the death of Miss Mortimer ; and I recollect, that, though she regularly received his letters, and affected no mystery in regard to them, she never desired me to read them, but often in my presence destroyed them with her own hand. For the preservation of the fragment, I seemed indebted to accident alone ; and I more than half suspected, that Mr Maitland's later correspondence had purposely been concealed from one who formed its

principal subject. I wondered at my friend's caution. "Could she know me so little," thought I, "as to fear that I should be infected by this folly of Maitland's?—that I should be won by this involuntary second-hand sort of courtship?—that I should be mean enough to like a man who in a manner rejected me?" But whatever was the motive of Miss Mortimer's caution, she had left no indication of Mr Maitland's present sentiments towards me, nor any clue by which I could trace to him the source of my unexpected wealth.

Still I scarcely doubted, that I owed my two hundred pounds to the generosity of Maitland, and I often thought of restoring the money to him; since, considering the terms upon which we had parted, few things could be more humiliating for me than to become a pensioner on his bounty. But I was restrained from writing to him, by the fear that, as possibly he had never intended to offer me such a gift, he might consider my addressing him upon the subject as a mere device, to obtain the renewal of

an intercourse which he had voluntarily renounced.

Besides, Miss Mortimer's bequest furnished my only means of discharging another debt which had long occasioned me more mortification than I could have suffered from any obligation to Mr Maitland. My degrading debt to Lord Frederick was still unpaid ; and my deliverance from absolute and immediate want, was less gratifying to me, than the power of escaping from obligation to a wretch who had given proof of such heartless selfishness. I therefore resolved to comply with my friend's injunction to use without further inquiry the money which had so providentially been placed within my reach ; and the first purpose to which it was devoted, was the repayment of Lord Frederick's loan, with every shilling of interest to which law could have entitled him. The remainder I could not help dividing with Miss Mortimer's old servant; as the poor creature, who had grown grey in the family of my friend, had been deprived of the bequest by which her mistress had intended to acknowledge her

services. The purchase of a few decencies which my own wardrobe required, and the expense of a plain grave-stone to mark the resting-place of the best of women, reduced my possessions to thirty pounds. With this provision, which, small as it was, I owed to most singular good fortune, I was obliged to quit the asylum which had sheltered me from my bitterest sorrow, and had witnessed my most substantial joys; the home which was endeared to me by the kindness of a lost friend,—the birth place of my better being,—the spot which was hallowed by my first worship.

It was on a stormy winter night, I remember it well, that I turned weeping from the door of my only home. All day I had wandered through the cottage; I had sat by my friend's death-bed, and laid my head upon her pillow. I had placed her chair as she was wont to place it; had realized her presence in every well known spot, and bidden her a thousand and a thousand times farewell. When I left the house, the closing door sounded as drearily as the earth which I had heard rattle on her coffin.

It seemed the signal, that I was shut out from all familiar sights and sounds for ever. The storm that was beating on me became, by a natural thought, the type of my after life; and when all there seemed darkness, my mind wandered back to the sorrows of the past. I recalled another time when the wide earth, which lodges and supports her children of every various tribe, and opens at last in her bosom a resting-place for them all, contained no home for me. I remembered a time when I had felt myself alone, though in the presence of the universal Father,—destitute, in a world stored with his bounty,—desolate, though Omnipotence was pledged to answer my cry. My deliverance from this orphan state,—from this disastrous darkness, rushed upon my mind. I thought upon the mighty transformation which had gladdened the desert for me, and made the solitary place rejoice. The cry of thanksgiving burst from my lips, although it died amidst the storm. “ Oh Thou !” I exclaimed, “ who from pollution didst reclaim,—from rebellion didst receive,—from despair didst revive me,—let

but Thy presence be with me, and let my path lead where it will!"

As I passed the village church-yard, I turned to visit the grave of her whom I had lost. The stone had been placed upon it since I had seen it last, and I felt as if the performance of the last duty had made our separation more complete. "And is this all that I can do for thee my friend?" said I. "Are all the kindly charities cut off between us for ever? Hast thou, who wert so lately alive to the joys and the sorrows of every living thing, no share in all that is done or suffered here? Hast thou, who so lately wert my other soul, no feeling now that owns kindred with any thought of mine?—Yes. On one theme, in one employment we can sympathize still. We can still worship together." Kneeling upon the grave of my last earthly friend, I commended myself to a heavenly one, and was comforted.

CHAP. XIX.

They hate to mingle in the filthy fray,
Where the soul sours, and gradual rancour grows
Imbittered more from peevish day to day.

THOMSON.

THOUGH I was no longer of a temper to reject the means of comfort which still remained within my reach, or scornfully to repulse the mercies both of God and man, I had accepted with reluctance the asylum offered by the clergyman to whom Miss Mortimer had recommended me; for the reserve which shrinks from obligation, is one of the most unconquerable forms of pride. Besides, though the Doctor's professional duties had made me somewhat acquainted with him, his family were, even by character, strangers to me. The state of Miss

Mortimer's health had long precluded us from paying or receiving visits ; and my friend had none of those habits of moral portrait-painting which seduce so many into caricature. My reluctance to accept of the good man's hospitality, had, however, yielded partly to necessity, partly to the recollection that I had once heard the " Doctor's lady" called " the cleverest woman in the county." For ability I had always entertained a high regard, which is one of vanity's least bare-faced ways of claiming kindred with it. A residence with persons of education and good manners was irresistible, when the only alternative was an abode in a mean lodging, in which pride or prudence would forbid me to receive even the few who still owned my acquaintance. I had therefore consented to remain with Dr — till an answer should arrive from the sister to whom he had written on my behalf.

Though I knew that I was expected at the parsonage on the evening when I left Miss Mortimer's, I lingered long by the way. The spirit which, for a moment, had

raised me above my fate, could not tarry; and earthly woes and earthly passions soon resumed their power. A feeling of loneliness and neglect returned to weigh upon my heart; and when I reached the gate within which I was about to seek a shelter, I stopped, leant my head against it, and wept, as if I had never committed myself to a father's protection,—never exulted in a father's care. I felt it unkind that no one came to save me the embarrassment of introducing myself; and perhaps even my pride would not have stooped to the effort, had I not at last been accosted by my host, who excused himself for not having come to escort me, by saying that he had been unavoidably engaged in professional duty. He now welcomed me cordially, expressing a hope that I should soon feel myself at home,—“that is,” continued he, “as soon as the exertions of my good woman will allow you.”

To this odd proviso I could only answer, that I was afraid my visit might put Mrs _____ to inconvenience.”

“I wish that were possible Miss Percy,”

returned he, “ for then she would be quite in her element.”

By this time we had reached the door, and Dr _____ knocked loudly. No answer came, though the sounds of busy feet were heard within, and lights glanced swiftly across the windows. After another vigorous assault upon the knocker, the door was opened by a panting maid-servant, in time to exhibit the descent of my hostess from a stool which she had mounted, as it appeared, to light a lamp that hung from the ceiling. Snatching off a checked apron, which she threw into a corner, she advanced to receive me. “ Miss Percy !” she cried, “ I am so glad to see you !—Doctor, I had no notion you could have got back so soon,—and indeed Ma’am I am quite proud that you will accept of such accommodations as—Lord bless me girl ! did ever any body see such a candlestick ?—This way Ma’am, if you please,—To bring up a thing like that before strangers !”

During this miscellaneous oration, I had made my way into the parlour, and taken possession of the first seat I could find.

But this was too natural an arrangement of things to satisfy my good hostess. "Oh dear! Miss Percy, said she, "you are quite in the way of the door,—pray take this side; Doctor, can't you give Miss Percy that chair?"

At last the turmoil of placing us was over, and the good lady was compelled to be quiet for a little. The scenes which I had lately witnessed, the sense of being a stranger in what was now my only home, depressed my spirits, yet good manners inclined me to enter into conversation with my hostess. I soon found, however, that this was, for the present, out of the question; for though, under a sense of duty, she frequently spoke to her guest, my replies evidently escaped her powers of attention, these being occupied by certain sounds proceeding from the kitchen. For a while she kept fidgeting upon her chair, looking wistfully towards the door, her politeness maintaining doubtful strife with her anxieties. At last a crash of crockery, overcame her self-denial, and she ran out of the room.

Our ears were presently invaded by all the discords of wrath and hurry ; but the Doctor, who seemed accustomed to such tumults, quietly drew his chair close to mine, and began to discuss the merits of a late publication, repeating his remarks with immovable patience, as often as they were lost in the din. At length, however, he was touched in a tender point, for now an audible kick produced a howl from the old house-dog. The Doctor started up, took three strides across the room, wiped his forehead, and sat down again. "I thank Heaven," said he, "that the children are all in bed,"—and he went on with his criticism.

Late came the supper, and with it mine hostess, looking "unutterable things." She forced her mouth, however, into an incongruous smile, while she apologized to me for her absence ; but she was too full of her recent disaster long to deny herself the comforts of complaint and condolence. "I hope Miss Percy you will try to eat a little bit of supper, though to be sure it is a

pretty supper indeed for one who has been accustomed as you have been!"

The looks of the speaker shewed me that this speech was less intended for me than for the poor girl who waited at table. "I assure you Madam the supper is much better than any I ever was accustomed to, for I never exceed a biscuit or a jelly."

"Oh you are very good to say so, but I am sure—and then to have it served upon such mean-looking nasty old cracked rubbish,—but I hope you'll excuse it Ma'am, for Kitty there has thought fit to break no less than three dozen of our blue china supper set at one crash."

"That is a great pity."

"Pity! I declare my patience is quite worn out."

"We have reason to be thankful," said the Doctor, "that she did the thing at once; it puts you into only one fury, instead of three dozen. The treatise we were talking of Miss Percy—."

"Mercy upon me!" interrupted the lady, "there is no salt in this stuffing!"

“ I say the author appears to me to reason upon false premises when ——”

“ Hand the sauce to Miss Percy, do, that she have something to flavour that tasteless mess.”

The poor fluttered girl, in her haste to obey, dropped the sauce-boat into my lap. “ Heaven preserve me,” exclaimed the lady, “ she has finished your new sarsenet gown I declare.—Well! if you a’nt enough to drive one distracted!”

In vain did I protest that the gown was very little injured;—in vain did I represent that the poor girl was unavoidably fluttered by her former misdemeanour; peace was not re-established till the close of supper allowed the delinquent to retire. Mrs —— then seemed to collect her thoughts, and to recollect the propriety of conversing with her guest. “ It must have been very hard upon poor Miss Mortimer,” said she, “ to be so long confined, and all the affairs of her family at sixes and sevens all the while. To be sure, I dare say you would spare no trouble; but after all there is nothing like the eye of a mistress.”

Shocked as I was at this careless mention of my friend, I forced myself to answer, "Miss Mortimer's method was so regular that I never could perceive where any trouble was necessary."

"That might be the case in Miss Mortimer's family. For my part I have hard enough work with mine from morning to night. I really can't conceive how people get on who take matters so easily. To be sure there must be great waste, but some people can afford that better than others."

"There was no waste in Miss Mortimer's family, Madam," answered I, my spirit rising at this reflection on my friend, "not even a waste of power."

I repented of this taunt almost the moment it was uttered. But it was lost upon my hostess, who went on to demonstrate, that, without her ceaseless intervention, disorder and ruin must ensue. "Miss Percy, said the Doctor gravely, "are you satisfied with the order of pins in ordinary papers; or do you purchase the pins wholesale that you may arrange them more correctly for yourself?"

“ Oh none of your gibes Dr —— ; you know very well I don’t spend my time in sticking pins or any such trifles.—I have work enough,—and more than enough, in attending to your family.”

“ Ay, my dear—and fortunate it is that all your industry has taken that turn, for you can never be industrious by proxy ; you can work with no hands but your own.”

It was now the hour of rest, or, more properly speaking, it was bed-time ; for I was disturbed by the bustle of the household long after I had retired to a chamber, finical enough to keep me in mind that it was the “stranger’s room.” With a sigh, I remembered the quiet shelter I had lost, and that true hospitality which never once reminded me, even by officious cares, that I was a stranger. I hoped, however, that the turmoil occasioned by my arrival, and the destruction of the blue supper set being over, peace might be restored in the family ; and the calm of the following morning be the sweeter for the hurricane of the night. But the tumult of the evening was

a lulling murmur to the full chorus of busy morn. Ringing, trampling, scraping, knocking, scrubbing, and all the clatter of housewifery, were mingled with the squalls of children, and the clang of chastisement; and above all swelled my landlady's tones, in every variety of exhortation and impatience.

In short, Mrs —— was one of those who could not be satisfied with putting the machine in motion, unless she watched and impelled the action of every wheel and pivot. The interference was of course more productive of derangement than dispatch. Besides, by taking upon herself all the business of all the maids, my hostess necessarily neglected that of the mistress, the consequence of which was general confusion and discomfort. Few can be so ignorant of human nature as to wonder that I endured the petty miseries to which I was thus subjected with less patience than I had lately shewn under real misfortune. A little religion will suffice to produce acts of resignation, when events have tinctured the mind with their own solemnity, or when,

“ by the sadness of the countenance, the heart is,” for a time, “ made better ;” but Christian patience finds exercise on a thousand occasions, when the dignity of her name would be misapplied ; and I had yet much to gain of that heavenly temper, which extends its influence to lesser actions and lesser foibles. A few hours served to make me completely weary of my new abode, and I anxiously wished for the summons which was to transfer me to another. Dr —— assured me that his sister would lose no time in endeavouring to serve me, and I was determined to accept of any situation which she should propose.

Mrs Murray, the lady to whose patronage I had been recommended, was the wife of a naval officer. Captain Murray was then at sea ; and she, with her son and daughter, resided in Edinburgh. Far from being averse to follow my fortunes in this distant quarter, I preferred a residence where I was wholly unknown. The friendship of Mr Sidney procured for me the offer of an eligible situation in town ; but I was predetermined against hazarding the

humiliations to which such a situation must have exposed me. The wisdom of this resolution, I must own, would not bear examination, and therefore it was never examined; for I retained too much adroitness in self-deceit to let prudence fairly contest the point with pride. I was destined to pay the penalty of my choice, and to illustrate the invariable sequence of a “haughty spirit” and a “fall.”

The expected letter at length arrived, and I thought myself fortunate beyond my hopes, when I found that Mrs Murray was inclined to receive me into her own family. My knowledge of music, particularly my skill in playing on the harp, had recommended me as a teacher in a country which pays for her fruitfulness in poetry by a singular sterility in the other fine arts. Mrs Murray inquired upon what terms I would undertake the tuition of her daughter, and seemed only fearful that my demands might exceed her powers. After the receipt of her letter, I was most eager to depart. To terms I was utterly indifferent. All I wanted was quiet, and an asylum which inferred no ob-

ligation to strangers. It is true, that my hostess often assured me of the pleasure she received from my visit; but my presence evidently occasioned such an infinity of trouble, that, if her assurances were sincere, she must have been filled with more than the spirit of martyrdom in my service. I was too impatient to be gone to wait the formal arrangement of my engagement with Mrs Murray. I instantly wrote to commit the terms of it entirely to herself, and then took measures to obtain my immediate conveyance to Scotland.

A journey by land was too expensive to be thought of; I therefore secured my passage in a merchant vessel. It was in vain that Dr —— advised me to wait further instructions from his sister, in hopes that she might suggest a more eligible mode of travelling, or at least give me notice that she was prepared for my reception. My dislike of my present abode, my restlessness under a sense of obligation to such a person as Mrs —— prevailed against his counsels. In vain did he represent the discomforts of a voyage at such a season of

the year. I was not more habitually impatient of present evil than fearless of that which was yet to come. In short, after little more than a week's residence at the parsonage, I insisted upon making my debut as a sailor in the auspicious month of February, and committing myself, at that stormy season, to an element which as yet I knew only from description.

Dr — and Mr Sidney accompanied me to the vessel, and I own I began to repent of my obstinacy, when they bade me farewell. As I saw their boat glide from the vessel's side, and answered their parting signals, and saw first the known features, then the forms, then the little bark itself, fade from my sight, I wept over the rashness which had exiled me among strangers, and coveted the humblest station cheered by the face of friend or kinsman. The wind blowing strong and cold soon obliged me to leave the deck ; and, when I entered the close airless den in which I was to be imprisoned, with fourteen fellow-sufferers, I cordially wished myself once more under

the restraint imposed by nice arrangement and finical decoration.

I was soon obliged to retreat to a bed, compared with which the worst I had ever occupied was the very couch of luxury. "It must be owned," thought I, "that a sea voyage affords good lessons for a fine lady." Sleep was out of the question. I was stunned with such variety of noise as made me heartily regret the quiet of the parsonage. The rattling of the cordage, the lashing of the waves, the heavy measured tread, the tuneless song repeated without end, interrupted only by the sudden dissonant call, and then begun again,—these, besides a hundred inexplicable disturbances, continued day and night. To these was soon added another, which attacked my quiet through other mediums than my senses; the ship sprung a leak, and the pumps were worked without intermission.

Meanwhile, the wind rose to what I thought a hurricane; and, among us passengers, whose ignorance probably magnified the danger, all was alarm and dismay.

A general fit of piety bespoke the general dread; and they who had before been chiefly intent upon establishing their importance with their fellow-travellers, seemed now feelingly convinced of their own dependence and insignificancy. For my part, I prepared for death with much greater resignation than I had found to bestow upon the previous evils of my voyage;—not surely that it is easier to resign life than to submit to a few inconveniences,—but that I had a tendency to treat my religion like one of the fabled divinities, who are not to be called into action except upon worthy occasions; whereas, it is indeed her agency in matters of ordinary occurrence that shews her true power and value. I am much mistaken, if it be not easier to die like a martyr than to live like a Christian; and if the glory of our faith be not better displayed in a life of meekness, humility, and self-denial, than even in a death of triumph. I am sure the question would not bear dispute, if all mankind were unhappily born with feelings as lively, and passions as strong as mine. Whether my

faith would have been equal even to what I account the lesser victory, remains to be proved; for, on the second day, the gale abated, and, from our heart-sinking prison we were once more released, to breathe the fresh breeze which now blew from the near coast of Holland.

The bloody conflict was then only beginning which has won for my country such imperishable honours. At Rotterdam we could then find safety, and the means of refitting our crazy vessel, so far as was necessary for the completion of our voyage. It will readily be believed, that those of our company who were least accustomed to brave the ocean, were eager to tread the steady earth once more. We all went on shore; and I, wholly ignorant of all methods of economy in a situation so new to me, took up my abode in a comfortable hotel, where I remained during the week which elapsed before we were able to proceed upon our voyage. At the end of that time, I discovered with surprise and consternation, that my wealth had diminished to little more than ten guineas. I

comforted myself, however, by recollecting, that once under the protection of Mrs Murray I should have little occasion for money; and that a few shillings were all the expence which I was likely to incur before I was safely lodged in my new home.

The remainder of the voyage was prosperous; and in little more than a fortnight after my first embarkation, I found myself seated in the hackney-coach which was to convey me from the harbour to Edinburgh. Not even the beauty and singularity of this romantic town could divert my imagination from the person upon whom I expected so much of my future happiness to depend. I anticipated the character, the manners, the appearance, the very attire of Mrs Murray; imagined the circumstances of my introduction, and planned the general form of our future intercourse. "Oh that she may be one whom I can love, and love safely," thought I; "one endowed with somewhat of the spirit of her whom I have lost!" My intercourse with the world, perhaps my examination of my own heart,

had destroyed much of my fearless confidence in every thing that bore the human form ; and now my spirits sunk, as I recollected how small was my chance of finding another Miss Mortimer.

A sullen twilight was closing as I entered the street of dull magnificence, in which stood the dwelling of my patroness. Though in the midst of a large city, all seemed still and forsaken. The bustle of business or amusement was silent here. Single carriages, passing now and then at long intervals, sounded through the vacant street till the noise died in the distance. The busy multitudes whom I was accustomed to associate with the idea of a city, had retired to their homes ; and I envied them who could so retire,—who could enter the sanctuary of their own roof, sit in their own accustomed seat, hear the familiar voice, and grasp the hand that had ten thousand times returned the pressure. All around me strengthened the feelings of loneliness which are so apt to visit the heart of a stranger ; and I anxiously looked from the carriage to descry the only spot in

which I could claim an interest. The coach stopped at the door of a large house, handsome indeed, but more dark I thought and dismal if possible than the rest. I scarcely breathed till my summons was answered; nor was it without an effort that I inquired whether Mrs Murray was at home?

“No Madam,” was the answer, “she has been gone this fortnight.”

“Gone! Good Heavens! Whither?”

“To Portsmouth, Madam. As soon as the news came of the Captain’s coming in wounded, Mrs Murray and Miss Arabella set out immediately.”

“And did she leave no letter for me? No instructions?”

The servant’s answer convinced me that my arrival was even wholly unexpected. Struck with severe disappointment, overwhelmed with a sense of utter desertedness, my spirits failed, and I sunk back into the carriage faint and forlorn.

“Do you alight here, Ma’am?” inquired the coachman.

“No!” answered I, scarcely knowing what I said.

“Where do you go next?” asked the man.

I replied only by a bitter passion of tears. “Alas!” thought I, “I once, in the mere wilfulness of despair, rejected the blessings of a home and a friend. How righteous is the retribution which leaves me now homeless and friendless.”

“Perhaps Ma’am,” said the servant, seemingly touched by my distress, “Mrs Murray may have left some message with Mr Henry for you.”

“Mr Henry,” cried I, “Is Mrs Murray’s son here?”

“Yes Ma’am. Mr Henry staid to finish his classes in the college. He is not at home just now, but I expect him every minute. Will you please to come in and rest a little?”

With this invitation I thought it best to comply; and, dismissing the coach, followed the servant into the house. I was shown into a handsome parlour, where the cheerful blaze of a Scotch coal fire gave light

enough to shew that all was elegance and comfort. My buoyant heart rose again, and, not considering how improbable it was that my patroness should commit a girl of eighteen to the guardianship of a youth little above the same age, I began to hope that Mrs Murray had given her son directions to receive me. In this hope I sat waiting his return, now listening for his approach, now trying to conjecture what instructions he would bring me, now beguiling the time with the books which were scattered round the room.

Though some of these were works of general literature, there was sufficient peculiarity in the selection, to shew that the young student was intended for the bar. Indeed, before he arrived, I had formed, from a view of the family apartment, a tolerable guess of the habits and pursuits of its owners. Open upon a sofa was a pocket Tibullus; within a Dictionary of Decisions lay a well-read first volume of the Nouvelle Eloise. Then there were Le Vaillant's Travels, Erskine's Institutes, and a Vindication of Queen Mary. "If the young law

yer has not disposed of his heart already, I shall be too pretty for my place," thought I: " And now for my patroness." The card racks contained some twenty visiting tickets, upon which the same matronly names were repeated at least four times. A large work-bag which hung near the great chair, was too well stuffed to close over a half-knitted stocking, and a prayer-book, which opened of itself at the prayer for those who travel by sea. My imagination instantly pictured a faded, serious countenance, with that air of tender abstraction which belongs to those whose thoughts are fixed upon the absent and the dear. Miss Arabella's magnificent harp stood in a window, and her likeness in the act of dancing a hornpipe hung over the chimney; her music-stand was loaded with easy sonatas and Scotch songs; and her port-folio was bursting with a humble progression of wa-
ter-colour drawings.

My conjectures were interrupted by a loud larum at the house-door, which announced the return of my young host. My heart beat anxiously. I started from

the sofa like one who felt no right to be seated there, and sat down again because I felt myself awkward when standing. I thought I heard the servant announce my arrival to his master as he passed through the lobby ; and after a few questions asked and answered in an under voice, the young man entered the parlour with a countenance which plainly said, “ What in the world am I to do with the creature ? ” As I rose to receive him, however, I saw this expression give place to another. Strong astonishment was pictured in his face, then yielded again to the glow of youthful complacency and admiration.

On my part I was little less struck with my student’s exterior than he appeared to be with mine. Instead of the awkward mawkish school-boy whom I had fancied, he was a tall elegant young man, with large sentimental black eyes, and a clear brown complexion, whose paleness repaid in interest whatever it subtracted from the youthfulness of his appearance.

I was the first to speak. Having expressed my regret at Mrs Murray’s absence,

and the cause of it, I begged to know whether she had left any commands for me. Murray replied, that he believed his mother had written to me before her departure, and that she had hoped her letter might reach me in time to delay my journey till a milder season.

“ Unfortunately,” said I, “ most unfortunately, I had set out before that letter arrived.”

“ Excuse me,” returned my companion, with polite vivacity, “ if I cannot call any accident unfortunate which has procured me this pleasure.” I could answer this civility only by a gesture, for my heart was full. I saw that I had no claim to my present shelter, and other place of refuge I had none. Oh how did I repent the self-will which had reduced me to so cruel a dilemma. “ In a few weeks at farthest,” continued Mr Murray, “ my father will be able to travel, and then I am certain my mother will bring Arabella home immediately.”

Still I could make no reply. “ A few weeks!” thought I, “ What is to become of me even for one week, even for one

night!" Tears were struggling for vent; but to have yielded to my weakness, would have seemed like an appeal to compassion, and the moment this thought occurred, the necessary effort was made. I rose, and requested that Mr Murray would allow his servant to procure a carriage for me, and direct me to some place where I could find respectable accommodation.

To this proposal Murray warmly objected. "I hope,—I beg Miss Percy," said he eagerly, "you will not think of leaving my mother's house to-night. Though she has been obliged to refuse herself the pleasure of receiving you, I know she would be deeply mortified to find that you would not remain, even for one night, under her roof."

I made my acknowledgements for his invitation; but said, I had neither title nor desire to intrude upon any part of Mrs Murray's family, and renewed my request. Murray persevered in urgent and respectful intreaties. They were so well seconded by the lateness of the hour, for it was now near ten o'clock, and by the contrast of the comfort within doors, with the storm

which was raging abroad, that my scruples began to give way ; and the first symptom of concession was so eagerly seized, that, before I had leisure to consider of proprieties, my young host had ordered his mother's bed-chamber to be prepared for my reception.

This arrangement made, he turned the conversation to general topics, and amused me very agreeably till we separated for the night. I know not if ever I had offered up more hearty thanksgivings for shelter and security than I did in that evening's prayer ; so naturally do we reserve our chief gratitude for blessings of precarious tenure. But I omitted my self-examination that night, either because I was worn out and languid, or because I was half conscious of having done what prudence would not justify.

I slept soundly, however, and awoke in revived spirits. My host renewed all his attentions. We conversed, in a manner very interesting to ourselves, of public places, of the last new noyel ; and this naturally led us into the labyrinths of the hu-

man heart, and the mysteries of the tender passion. Then I played on the harp, which threw my young lawyer into raptures; then I sung, which drew tears into the large black eyes. In short, the forenoon was pretty far advanced before my student recollect ed that he had missed his law-class by two hours.

All this was the effect of mere thoughtlessness; for I was guiltless of all design upon Murray's affections, or even upon his admiration. I now, however, suddenly recollect ed myself, and renewed my inquiries for some eligible abode; but Murray, with more warmth than ever, objected to my removal. He laboured to convince me that his mother's house, for so he dexterously called it, was the most eligible residence for me, at least till I should learn how Mrs Murray wished me to act. Finding me, however, a little hard of conviction, he proposed a new expedient. He offered to call upon a sister of his father's, and to obtain for me her advice or assistance. Most cordially did I thank him for this proposal, and urged him to execute it instantly. He

lingered, however, and endeavoured to escape the subject ; and when I persisted in pressing it, he fairly owned his unwillingness to perform his promise. " If Mrs St Clare should wile you away from me," said he, with a very Arcadian sigh, " how will you ever repay me for such self-devotion ! "

" With an old song," answered I gaily ; " payment enough for such a sacrifice." But I registered the sigh notwithstanding. " Touched already !" thought I. " So much for Tibullus and the *Nouvelle Eloise*."

At last I drove him away, but he soon returned, and told me he had not found Mrs St Clare at home. I made him promise to renew his attempt in the evening, and proposed meanwhile to write to Mrs Murray an account of my situation. My companion at first made no objection, but afterwards discovered that it was almost too late to overtake that day's post, and offered to save time, by mentioning the matter in the postscript of a letter which he had already written. I consented, but afterwards obliged him to tell me, rather unwillingly,

in what terms he had put his communication.

“ From the way in which you have written,” said I, when he had ended, “ Mrs Murray will never discover that I am residing in her house. Were it not better to say distinctly that I am here ?”

I looked at my young lawyer as I spoke, and saw him blush very deeply. He hesitated too, and stammered while he answered, “ that it was unnecessary, since his mother could not suppose me to reside anywhere else.”

The full impropriety of my situation flashed upon me at once. Murray evidently felt that there was something in it which he was unwilling to submit to the judgment of his mother. My delicacy, or rather perhaps my pride, thus alarmed, my resolution was taken in a moment ; but as I could not well avow the grounds of my determination, I retired in silence to make what little preparation was necessary for my immediate departure. If my purpose had wanted confirmation, it would have been confirmed by a dialogue which I accidental-

ly overheard, between Murray and a youth who just then called upon him. My host seemed pressing his friend to return to supper. "Do come," said he, "and I will shew you an angel—the loveliest girl—" "Where? in this house?" "Yes, my sister's governess." "Left to keep house for you? Eh? a good judicious arrangement, faith." "Hush—I assure you her manners are as correct as her person is beautiful;—such elegance,—such modest vivacity,—and then she sings! Oh Harry, if you did but hear her sing!" "Well I believe I must come and take a look of this wonder." "The wonder," thought I, "shall not be made a spectacle to idle boys,—nor remain in a situation of which even they can see the impropriety." I rang for the house-maid, and putting half-a-guinea into her hand, requested that she would direct me to reputable lodgings, and procure a hackney-coach to convey me thither. Both of these services she performed without delay; meanwhile, I went to take leave of my young host.

He heard of my intention with manifest

discomposure, and exerted all his eloquence to shake my purpose; intreating me at least to remain with him till he had seen Mrs St Clare; but I was more disposed to anger than to acquiescence, when I recollect that all his intreaties were intended to make me do what he himself felt to need disguise or apology. Finding me resolute, he next begged to know where he might bring Mrs St Clare to wait upon me; but suspecting that my apartments might not be such as I chose to exhibit, I declined this favour. I took, however, the lady's address, meaning to avail myself of her assistance in procuring employment.

CHAP. XX.

Lend me thy clarion, goddess ! Let me try
To sound the praise of merit ere it dies ;
Such as I oft have chanced to espy,
Lost in the dreary shades of dull obscurity.

SHENSTONE.

WITH a feeling of dignity and independence which had forsaken me in my more splendid abode, I took possession of an apartment contrived to serve the double purposes of parlour and bed-chamber. “ I have done right,” thought I, “ whatever be the consequences ; and these are in the hands of One who has given me the strongest pledge that he will overrule them for my advantage.” Yet, alas for my folly ! I was almost the next moment visited by the fear, that the advantage might not be pa-

pable to present observation, and that it might belong more to my improvement than to my convenience.

I now felt no reluctance to address Mrs Murray, and to inquire, whether it were still her wish to receive me into her family. One circumstance alone embarrassed me; I plainly perceived, that I had already made such an impression upon Henry, as his mother was not likely to approve; and it seemed dishonourable to owe my admission into her family to her ignorance of that which she would probably deem sufficient reason to exclude me. I knew the world, indeed, too well, to expect that the passion of a youth of twenty, for a girl with a fortune of nine pounds three shillings, was itself likely to be either serious or lasting; but its consequences might be both, if it relaxed industry, or destroyed cheerfulness, darkening the sunny morning with untimely shade. But how could I forewarn my patroness of her danger? Could I tell her, not only that one day's acquaintance with her son had sufficed me to make the conquest, but, which was still less *selon les regles*, to dis-

cover that I had made it ? I dared not brave the smile which would have avenged such an absurdity. After some consideration, I took my resolution. I determined to introduce myself the next day to Mrs St Clare, who, I imagined, would not long leave her sister-in-law in ignorance of my personal attractions ; for I have often observed, that we ladies, while we grudge to a beauty the admiration and praise of the other sex, generally make her amends by the sincerity and profuseness of our own.

“ And if her description alarm Mrs Murray,” thought I ; “ if it deter her from admitting me under the roof with her son, what then is to become of me ?—What will my pretty features do for me then ?—What have they ever done for me, except to fill my ears with flatteries, and my mind with conceit, and the hearts of others with envy and malice. Maitland, indeed,—but no—it was not my face that Maitland loved. Rather to the pride of beauty I owe that wretched spirit of coquetry by which I lost him. And now this luckless gift may deprive me of respectable protection and sub-

sistence. Surely I shall at last be cured of my value for a bauble so mischievous—so full of temptation—so incapable of ministering, either to the glory of God or the good of man !” Ah how easy it is to despise baubles while musing by fire-light in a solitary chamber !

The evening passed in solitude, but not in weariness ; for I was not idle. I spent the time in writing to Mrs Murray, and in giving to my friend Dr ——— an account of my voyage, and of my disappointment. The hour soon came which I now habitually devoted to the invitation of better thoughts, the performance of higher duties ; and thanks be to Heaven, that neither human converse, nor human protection, nor ought else that the worldly can enjoy or value, is necessary to the comfort of that hour.

The next day Murray came early, under pretence of inquiring how I was satisfied with my accommodation ; and I was pleased that the mission which he had undertaken to Mrs St Clare, gave me a pretext for being glad to see him. I know not what excuse

he could make for a visit of three hours long, but my plea for permitting it was the impossibility of ordering him away. He left me, however, at last; and, more convinced than ever that his mother would do well to dispense with my services, I went to present myself to Mrs St Clare.

Arrived at her house, I was ushered into the presence of a tall, elderly, hard-favoured gentlewoman; who, seated most perpendicularly on a great chair, was employed in working open stiches on a French lawn apron. I cannot say that her exterior was much calculated to dispel the reserve of a stranger. Her figure might have served to illustrate all the doctrines of the acute angle. —Her countenance was an apt epitome of the face of her native land,—rough with deep furrow and uncouth prominence, and grim with one dusky uniformity of hue. As I entered, this erect personage rose from her seat, and, therefore, almost necessarily advanced one step to meet me. I offered some apology for my intrusion. From a certain rustle of her stiff lutestring gown, I guessed that the lady made some

gesture of courtesy, though I cannot pretend that I saw the fact.

“ Mr Murray, I believe, has been so good as to mention me,” said I.

The lady looked towards a chair, and this I was obliged to accept as an invitation to sit down.

“ I have been particularly unfortunate in missing Mrs Murray,” said I.

“ Hum !” returned the lady, with a scarcely perceptible nod ; and a pause followed.

“ She left Scotland very unexpectedly.”

“ Very unexpectedly.” Another pause.

“ I happened unluckily to have begun my journey before I learnt that it was unnecessary.”

“ That was a pity.”

“ I hope she is not likely to be long absent ?”

“ Indeed, there is no saying.”

“ Perhaps she may not choose that I should wait her return ?”

“ Really I can’t tell.”

Until this hour, I had never known what it was to shrink before the repulse of frozen

reserve; for the cordiality which had once been obtained for me by the gifts of nature or of fortune, had of late been secured to me by partial affection and Christian benevolence. My temper began to rebel; but struggles with my temper were now habitual with me. I drew a long breath, and renewed my animating dialogue. " May I ask whether, in case Mrs Murray should not want my services, you think I am likely to find employment here as a governess?"

" Indeed I don't know. Few people like to take entire strangers into their families."

" The same recommendation which introduced me to Mrs Murray, I can still command."

" Hum." A long silence followed, for I had another conflict with my temper; but I was fully victorious before I spoke again.

" I am afraid, Madam," said I, " that you will not think me entitled to use Mrs Murray's name with you so far as to beg that, upon her account, if you should hear

of any situation in which I can be useful, you will have the goodness to recollect me."

"It is not likely, Miss Percy, that I should hear of any thing to suit you. At any rate, I make it a rule never to interfere in people's domestic arrangements."

My patience now quite exhausted, I took my leave with an air, I fear, not less ungracious than that of my hostess ; and pursued my lonely way homewards, fully inclined to defer the revolting task of soliciting employment till I should ascertain that Mrs Murray's plans made it indispensable.

How often, as I passed along the street, did I start, as my eye caught some slight resemblance to a known face, and sigh over the futility of my momentary hope ! He who in the wildest nook of earth possesses one friend "to whom he may tell that solitude is sweet," knows not how cheerless it is to enter a home drearily secure from the intrusion of a friend. Yet, having now abundance of leisure for reflection, I should have been inexcusable, if I had made no

use of this advantage; and if, in the single point of conduct which seemed left to my decision, I had acted with imprudence. There was evident impropriety in Murray's visits. To encourage his boyish admiration would have been cruel to him, ungenerous towards Mrs Murray, and incautious with respect to myself. It was hard, indeed, to resign the only social pleasure within my reach; but was pleasure to be deliberately purchased at the hazard of causing disquiet to the parent, and rebellion in the son? and this too by one engaged to exercise self-denial as the mere instrument of self-command? I peremptorily renounced the company of my young admirer; and whoever would know what this effort cost me, must reject earnest entreaty, and resist sorrowful upbraiding, and listen to a farewell which is the known prelude to utter solitude.

A dull unvaried week passed away, during which I never went abroad except to church. My landlady indeed insisted, that even women of condition might with safety and decorum traverse her native city

unattended ; and pointed out from my window persons whom she averred to be of that description ; but the assured gait and gaudy attire of these ladies made me suspect that she was rather unfortunate in her choice of instances. At last, in mere weariness of confinement, I one day consented to accompany her abroad.

We passed the singular bridge which delighted me with the strangely varied prospect of antique grandeur and modern regularity, of a city cleft into a noble vista towards naked rock and cultivated plain,—seas busy with commerce, and mountains that shelter distant solitudes. I could scarcely be dragged away from this interesting spot ; but my landlady, to whom it offered nothing new, was, soon after leaving it, much more attracted by a little scarlet flag, upon which was printed in large letters, “ A rousing in here.” This she told me announced a sale of household furniture, which she expressed much curiosity to see ; and I suffered her to conduct me down a lane or rather passage, so narrow as to afford us scarcely room to walk abreast, or

light enough to guide us through the filth that encumbered our way. A second notice directed us to ascend a dark winding staircase, leading, as I afterwards learned, to the abodes of about thirty families. We had climbed I think about as high as the whispering gallery of St Paul's, when our progress was arrested by the crowd which the auction had attracted to one of the several compartments into which each floor seemed divided. I recoiled from joining a party apparently composed of the lowest orders of mankind. But my companion, averring that in such places she could often make a good bargain, elbowed her way into the scene of action.

While I hesitated whether to follow her, my attention was caught by the beauty of a child, who now half hiding his rosy face on the shoulder of his mother cast a sidelong glance on the strangers, and now ventured to take a more direct view; while she, regardless of the objects of his curiosity, stood leaning her forehead against the wall in an attitude of quiet dejection. I watched her for a few moments, and saw

the tears trickle from her face. So venerable is unobtrusive sorrow, that I could with more ease have accosted a duchess than this poor woman, though her dress denoted her to be one of those upon whom has fallen a double portion of the primeval curse. Her distress, however, did not seem so awe-inspiring to her equals ; for one of them presently approaching, gave her a smart slap upon the shoulder, and, in a tone between pity and reproach, inquired, "what ailed her?" The poor woman looked up, wiped the tears from her eyes, and faintly tried to smile. "There's not much ails me," said she ; but the words were scarcely articulate.

"Many a one has been rouped out before now," said the other.

The reflection was ill-timed ; for my poor woman covered her face with her apron, and burst into a violent fit of sobbing. I had now found a person of whom I could more freely ask questions, which, indeed, all seemed eager to answer ; and I quickly discovered that Cecil Graham, for so my mourner was called, was the wife of a soldier,

whom the first and firmest sentiment of a Highlander had lured from his native glen to follow the banner of his chieftain ; that when his regiment had been ordered abroad, she had unwillingly been left behind ; that, in the decent abode which Highland frugality had procured for her, she had, by her labour, supported herself and two children ; but that, on the night before her rent became due, she had been robbed of the little deposit which was meant to pay it ; and that her landlord, after some months of vain delay, had availed himself of his right over the property of his debtor.

“ And will he,” cried I, touched with a fellow-feeling, “ will he drive this poor young woman abroad among strangers ! without a home or a friend ! God forgive him.”

“ I do not want for friends ; and good friends, Madam,” said the Highlander, in the strong accent of her country, but with far less of its peculiar pronunciation than disguised the language of her companions ; “ all the streams of Benarde canna’ wash my blood from the laird’s himsel’.”

“ What laird ?” inquired I, smiling at the metaphorical language of my new acquaintance. “ Eredine himsel’, lady ; his grandfather and my great-grandmother were sister and brother childer ;” meaning, as I afterwards found, that these ancestors were cousins.

“ And will the laird do nothing for his relation ?” said I.

“ That’s what *he* would, Madam, and that indeed would *he*,” returned Cecil, laying an odd emphasis upon the pronoun, and gesticulating with great solemnity. “ He’s no’ the man to take the child out of the cradle and put out the smoke.”

“ Why do you not apply to him then ?”

“ Indeed lady I’m no’ going to trouble the laird. Ye see he might think that I judged he was like bound to uphold me and mine, because Jemmy was away wi’ Mr Kenneth, ye see.”

“ What then will you do ? Will you allow yourself to be stripped of all ?”

“ If I could make my way home, lady,” returned the Highlander, “ I should do well enough,—we must not expect to be

always full-handed. What I think the most upon is, that they should sell the bit cloth that mysel' span to row us in."

"To roll you in!" repeated I, utterly unable to guess what constituted the peculiar value of this bit of cloth.

"Aye," returned Cecil, "to wind Jemmy and me in, with your leave, when we are at our rest; and a bonnier bit linen ye could na' see. The like of yoursel' might have lain in it, lady, or Miss Graham hersel'."

I could scarcely help smiling at the tears which poor Cecil was now shedding over the loss of this strange luxury; and looked up to find some trace of folly in the countenance of one who, robbed of all her worldly possessions, bestowed her largest regrets upon a fine winding-sheet. But no trace of folly was there. The cool sagacity, indicated by the clear broad forehead and the distinct low-set eyebrow, was enlivened by the sparkle of a quick black eye; and her firm sharply chiseled face, though disfigured by its national latitude of cheek, presented a strong contrast to the dull vul-

garity of feature which surrounded her. When my examination was closed, I inquired how far distant was the home of which she had spoken.

“Did you ever hear of a place they call Glen Eredine?” said Cecil, answering my question by another. “It is like a hundred miles and a bit, west and north from this.”

“And how do you propose to travel so far at such a season?”

“If it be the will of the Best, I must just ask a morsel, with your leave, upon the way. I’ll not have much to carry—only the infant on my breast, and a pickle snuff I have gathered for my mother. This one is a stout lad-bairn—God save him; he’ll walk on’s feet a bit now and then.”

Though my English feelings revolted from the ease with which my Highlander condescended to begging, I could not help admiring the fortitude with which this young creature, for she did not seem above two and twenty, looked forward to a journey over frozen mountains, and lonely wilds, which she must traverse on foot, encumbered by two infants, and exposed to

the rigour of a stormy season. I stood pondering the means of preventing these evils, and at last asked her “ whether the parish would not bestow somewhat towards procuring her a conveyance ?”

“ What’s your will ?” said Cecil, as if she did not quite comprehend me, though at the same time I saw her redden deeply.

Thinking she had misunderstood me, I varied the terms of my question.

Cecil’s eyes flashed fire. “ The poor’s box !” said she, breathing short from the effort to suppress her indignation, “ Good troth there’s nobody needs even me to the like. The parish indeed ! No, no, we have come to much, but we have no come to that yet :” She paused, and tears rose to her eyes. “ My dear dog,”* said she, caressing her little boy, “ ye shall want both house and hauld before your mother cast shame upon ye, and your father so far away.”

Confounded at the emotion which I had unwittingly occasioned, I apologized as well as I was able, assuring her that I had not

* *Mo cuilean ghaolach.*—*Gaelic.*

the least intention to offend ; and that in my country, persons of the most respectable character accounted it no discredit to accept of parish aid. At last I partly succeeded in pacifying my Highlander. “ To be sure,” said she, “ every place must have its *oun* fashion, and it may come easy enough to the like of *them* ; but its no’ to be thought that people that’s come of respected gentles will go to *demean* themselves and all that belongs them.”

“ I was ackowledging my mistake, and endeavouring to excuse it upon the plea of a stranger’s ignorance, when one of the crowd advanced to inform Cecil that her treasured web was then offering for sale ; and, so far as I could understand the barbarous jargon of the speaker, seemed to urge the rightful owner to buy it back. Cecil’s answer was rather more intelligible. “ Well, well,” said she, “ if it be ordained, mysel’ shall lie in the bare boards, for that pound shall never be broken by me.”

“ What pound ?” inquired I.

“ A note that Jemmy willed to his mo-

ther," answered Cecil, " and I never had convenience to send her yet."

She spoke with perfect simplicity, as if wholly unconscious of the generous fidelity which her words implied.

I had so long been accustomed to riches that I could not always remember my poverty. In five minutes I had glided through the crowd, purchased Cecil's treasure, restored it to its owner, and recollected that, without doing her any real service, I had spent what I could ill afford to spare.

The time had been when I could have mistaken this impulse of constitutional good nature for an act of virtue ; but I had learnt to bestow that title with more discrimination. I was more embarrassed than delighted by the blessings which Cecil, half in Gaelic half in English, uttered with great solemnity. " Is it enough," asked conscience, " to humour the prejudices of this poor creature, and leave her real wants unrelieved ? " " But can they," replied selfishness, " spare relief to the wants of others, who are themselves upon the brink of

want?"—"She is like you, alone in the land of strangers," whispered sympathy. "She is the object," said piety, "of the same compassion to which you are indebted for life —life in its highest, noblest, sense!" "Is it right," urged worldly wisdom, "to part with your only visible means of subsistence?" "You have but little to give," pleaded my better reason; "seize then the opportunity which converts the mite into a treasure." The issue of the debate was, that I purchased for poor Cecil the more indispensable articles of her furniture, secured for her a shelter till a milder season might permit her to travel more conveniently, and found my wealth diminished to a sum which, with economy, might support my existence for another week.

Much have I heard of the rewards of an approving conscience, but I am obliged to confess, that my own experience does not warrant my recommending them as motives of conduct. I have uniformly found my best actions, like other fruits of an ungenial climate, less to be admired because they were good, than tolerated be-

cause they were no worse. I suspect, indeed, that the comforts of self-approbation are generally least felt when they are most needed ; and that no one, who in depressing circumstances enters on a serious examination of his conduct, ever finds his spirits raised by the review. If this suspicion be just, it will obviously follow, that the boasted dignity of conscious worth, is not exactly the sentiment which has won so many noble triumphs over adversity. For my part, as I shrunk into my lonely chamber, and sighed over my homely restricted meal, I felt more consolation in remembering the goodness which clothes the unprofitable lily of the field, and feeds the improvident tenants of the air, than in exulting that I could bestow “ half my goods to feed the poor.”

That recollection, and the natural hilarity of temper which has survived all the buffetings of fortune, supported my spirits during the lonely days which passed in waiting Mrs Murray’s reply. At length it came, to inform me, that the state of Captain Murray’s health would induce my pa-

troness to shun in a milder climate the chilling winds of a Scotch spring; to express her regrets for my unavailing journey, and for her own inability to further my plans; and, as the best substitute for her own presence, to refer me once more to the erect Mrs St Clare. This reference I at first vehemently rejected; for I had not yet digested the courtesies which I already owed to this lady's urbanity. But, moneyless and friendless as I was, what alternative remained? I was at last forced to submit, and that only with the worse grace for my delay.

To Mrs St Clare's then I went, in a humour which will be readily conceived by any one who remembers the time when, sobbing under a sense of injury, he was forced to kiss his hand and beg pardon. The lady's mien was nothing sweetened since our last interview. While I was taking uninvited possession of a seat, she leisurely folded up her work, pulled on her gloves, and, crossing her arms, drew up into the most stony rigidity of aspect. Willing to dispatch my business as quickly as possible,

I presented Mrs Murray's letter, begging that she would consider it as an apology for my intrusion. "I have heard from Mrs Murray," said my gracious hostess, without advancing so much as a finger towards the letter which I offered. I felt myself redden, but I bit my lip and made a new attempt.

"Mrs Murray," said I, "gives me reason to hope that I may be favoured with your advice."

"You are a much better judge of your own concerns, Miss Percy, than I can be."

"I am so entirely a stranger here, Madam, that I should be indebted to any advice which might assist me in procuring respectable employment."

"I really know nobody just now that wants a person in your line Miss Percy?" In my line! The phrase was certainly not conciliating. "Indeed I rather wonder what could make my friend Mrs Murray direct you to me."

"A confidence in your willingness to oblige her I presume Madam," answered

I, no longer able to brook the cool insolence of my companion.

“ I should be glad to oblige her,” returned the impenetrable Mrs St Clare, without discomposing a muscle except those necessary to articulation ; “ so if I happen to hear of any thing in your way I will let you know. In the mean time, it may be prudent to go home to your friends, and remain with them till you find a situation.”

“ Had it been possible for me to follow this advice, Madam,” cried I, the scalding tears filling my eyes, “ you had never been troubled with this visit.”

“ Hum. I suppose you have not money to carry you home. Eh ?”

I would have retorted the insolent freedom of this question with a burst of indignant reproof ; but my utterance was choked ; I had not power to articulate a syllable.

“ Though I am not fond of advancing money to people I know nothing about,” continued the lady, “ yet upon Mrs Murray’s account here are five pounds, which

I suppose will pay your passage to London."

For more than a year I had maintained a daily struggle with my pride, and I fancied that I had, in no small degree, prevailed. Alas! occasion only was wanting to shew me the strength of my enemy. To be thus coarsely offered an alms by a common stranger, roused at once the sleeping serpent. A sense of my destitute state, dependent upon compassion, defenceless from insult; a remembrance of my better fortunes; pride, shame, indignation, and a struggle to suppress them all, entirely overcame me. A darkness passed before my eyes, the blood sprung violently from my nostrils, I darted from the room without uttering a word, and, before I was sensible of my actions, found myself in the open air.

I was presently surrounded by persons of all ranks; for the people of Scotland have yet to learn that unity of purpose which carries forward my townsmen without a glance to the right hand or the left; and I know not if ever the indisposition of a court beauty was inquired after in such

varied tones of sympathy as now reached my ear. In a few minutes the fresh air had so completely restored me, that the only disagreeable consequence of my indisposition was the notice which it had attracted. I took refuge from the awkwardness of my situation in the only shop which was then within sight ; and soon afterwards proceeded unmolested to my lonely home.

There I had full leisure to reconsider my morning's adventure. The time had been, when the bare suspicion of a wound would have made my conscience recoil from the probe. The time had been when I would have shaded my eye from the light which threatened to shew the full form and stature of my bosom foe ; for then, a treacherous will took part against me, and even my short conflicts were enfeebled by relentings towards the enemy. But now the will, though feeble, was honest ; and I could bear to look my sin in the face, without fear that lingering love should forbid its extermination. A review of my feelings and behaviour towards Mrs St Clare, brought me to a full sense of the unsubdued and unchrist-

ian temper which they betrayed. I saw that whilst I had imagined my “mountain to stand strong,” it was yet heaving with the wreckful fire. I felt, and shuddered to feel, that I had yet part in the spirit of the arch-rebel ; and I wept in bitterness of heart, to see that my renunciation of my former self had spared so much to show that I was still the same. Yet had this sorrow no connection with the fear of punishment. I had long since exchanged the horror of the culprit who trembles before his judge, for the milder anguish which bewails offence against the father and the friend ; and when I considered that my offences would cease but with my life,—that the polluted mansion must be razed ere the incurable taint could be removed,—I breathed from the heart the language in which the patriarch deprecates an earthly immortality ; and even at nineteen, when the youthful spirit was yet unbroken, and the warm blood yet bounded cheerily, I rejoiced from the soul that I should “not live alway.” Nor had my sorrow any resemblance to despair. A sense of my obstinate tenden-

cy to evil did but rouse me to resolutions of exertion ; for I knew that will and strength to continue the conflict were a pledge of final victory. Considering that humility, like other habits, was best promoted by its own acts, I that very hour forced my unwilling spirit to submission, by dispatching the following billet to Mrs St Clare :

“ Madam,

“ Strong, and I confess blameable, emotion prevented me this morning from acknowledging your bounty, for which I am not certainly the less indebted that I decline availing myself of it. I feel excused for this refusal, by the knowledge that circumstances, with which it is unnecessary to trouble you, preclude the possibility of applying your charity to the purpose for which it was offered.

“ I am, &c.

“ ELLEN PERCY.”

If others should be of opinion, as I now am, that the language of this billet inclined more to the stately than the conciliating,

let them look back to the time when duty, compassion, and gratitude, could not extort from me one word of concession to answer the parting kindness of my mother's friend. And let them learn to judge of the characters of others with a mercy which I do not ask them to bestow upon mine ; for, while men's worst actions are necessarily exposed to their fellow-men, there are few who, like me, unfold their temptations, or record their repentance.

CHAP. XXI.

His years are young, but his experience old.
His head unmellowed,—but his judgment ripe.
And, in a word, (for far behind his worth,
Come all the praises that I now bestow,)
He is complete in feature and in mind,
With all good grace to grace a gentleman.

SHAKESPEARE.

I WAS now in a situation which might have alarmed the fears even of one born to penury and inured to hardship. Every day diminished a pittance which I had no means of replacing ; and, in an isolation which debarred me alike from sympathy and protection, I was suffering the penalty of that perverse temper which had preferred exile among strangers, to an imaginary degradation among “ my own people.”

As it became absolutely necessary to dis-

cover some means of immediate subsistence, I expended part of my slender finances in advertising my wishes and qualifications ; but not one inquiry did the advertisement produce. Perhaps the Scottish mothers in those days insisted upon some acquaintance with the woman to whom they committed the education of their daughters, beyond what was necessary to ascertain her knowledge of the various arts of squandering time. I endeavoured to ward off actual want by such pastime work as had once ministered to my amusement, and afterwards to my convenience ; but I soon found that my labours were as useless as they were light ; for Edinburgh, at that time, contained no market for the fruits of feminine ingenuity.

In such emergency, it is not to be wondered if my spirits faltered. My improvident lightness of heart forsook me ; and though I often resolved to face the storm bravely, I resolved it with the tears in my eyes. I asked myself an hundred times a day, what better dependence I could wish than on goodness which would never withhold, and

power which could never be exhausted? And yet, a hundred times a day I looked forward as anxiously as if my dependence had been upon the vapour tossed by the wind. I felt that, though I had possessed the treasures of the earth, the blessing of Heaven would have been necessary to me; and I knew that it would be sufficient, although that earth should vanish from her place. Yet I often examined my decaying means of support as mournfully as if I had reversed the sentiment of the Roman; and "to live," had been the only thing necessary.

I was thus engaged one morning, when I heard the voice of Murray inquiring for me. Longing to meet once more the glance of a friendly eye, I was more than half tempted to retract my general order for his exclusion. I had only a moment to weigh the question, yet the prudent side prevailed, because, if the truth must be told, I chanced just then to look into my glass, and was ill satisfied with the appearance of my swoln eyes and colourless cheeks; so well did the motives of my unpremeditat-

ed actions furnish a clue to the original defects of my mind. However, though I dare not say that my decision was wise, I may at least call it fortunate ; since it probably saved me from one of those frothy passions which idleness, such as I was condemned to, sometimes engenders in the heads of those whose hearts are by nature placed in unassailable security. This ordinary form of the passion was certainly the only one in which it could then have affected me ; for what woman, educated as I had been, early initiated like me into heartless dissipation, was ever capable of that deep generous self-devoting sentiment which, in retirement, springs amid mutual charities and mutual pursuits, links itself with every interest of this life, and twines itself even with the hopes of immortality ? My affections and my imagination were yet to receive their culture in the native land of strong attachment, ere I could be capable of such a sentiment.

As I persevered in excluding Murray, the only being with whom I could now exchange sympathies was my new Highland

friend, Cecil Graham. I often saw her, and when I had a little conquered my disgust at the filth and disorder of her dwelling, I found my visits there as amusing as many of more “pomp and circumstance.” She was to me an entirely new specimen of human character; an odd mixture of good sense and superstition,—of minute parsimony and liberal kindness,—of shrewd observation, and a kind of romantic abstraction from sensible objects. Every thing that was said or done, suggested to her memory an adventure of some “gallant Graham,” or, to her fancy, the agency of some unseen being.

I had heard Maitland praise the variety, grace, and vigour of the Gaelic language. “If we should ever meet again,” thought I, “I should like to surprise him pleasantly;” so, in mere dearth of other employment, I obliged Cecil to instruct me in her mother tongue. The undertaking was no doubt a bold one, for I had no access to Gaelic books; nor if I had, could Cecil have read one page of them, though she could laboriously decypher a little English. But I

cannot recollect that I was ever deterred by difficulty. While Cecil was busy at her spinning, I made her translate every name and phrase which occurred to me ; tried to imitate the uncouth sounds she uttered, and then wrote them down with vast expense of consonants and labour. My progress would, however, have been impossible, if Cecil's dialect had been as perplexing to me as that of the Lowlanders of her own rank. But, though her language was not exactly English, it certainly was not Scotch. It was foreign rather than provincial. It was often odd, but seldom unintelligible. "I learnt by book," said she once when I complimented her on this subject ; "and I had a good deal of English ; though I have lost some of it now, speaking among this uncultivate' people."

Cecil, who had no idea that labour could be its own reward, was very desirous to unriddle my perseverance in the study of Gaelic. But she never questioned me directly ; for, with all her honesty, Cecil liked to exert her ingenuity in discovering by-ways to her purpose. "You'll be thinking of going to the

North Country ?" said she one day, in the tone of interrogation. I told her I had no such expectation. " You'll may be get a good husband to take you there yet, and that's what I am sure I wish," said Cecil, as if she thought she had invoked for me the sum of all earthly good.

" Thank you, Cecil ; I am afraid I have no great chance."

" You don't know," answered Cecil, in a voice of encouragement. " Lady Ere-dine hersel' was but a Southron, with your leave."

I laughed ; for I had observed that Cecil always used this latter form of apology when she had occasion to mention any thing mean or offensive. " How came the laird," said I, " to marry one who was but a Southron ?"

" Indeed, she was just his fortune, lady," said Cecil, " and he could not go past her. And Mr Kenneth himsel' too is ordained, if he live, save him, to one from your coun-try."

" Have you the second-sight, Cecil, that

you know so well what is ordained for Mr Kenneth?"

"No, no, lady," said Cecil, shaking her head with great solemnity, "if you'll believe me, I never saw any thing *by* common. But we have a word that goes in our country, that 'a doe will come from the strangers' land to couch in the best den in Glen Eredine.' And the wisest man in Killifoildich, and that's Donald MacIan, told me, that 'the loveliest of the Saxon flowers would root and spread next the Hall hearth of Castle Eredine.'"

"A very flattering prophecy indeed, Cecil; and if you can only make it clear that it belongs to me, I must set out for Glen Eredine, and push my fortune."

"That's not to laugh at, lady," said Cecil very gravely; "there's nobody can tell where a blessing may light. You might even get our dear Mr Henry himself, if he knew but what a good lady you are."

Now this Mr Henry himself was Cecil's hero. She thought Mr Kenneth, indeed, entitled to precedence as the elder brother and heir-apparent; but her affections plain-

ly inclined towards Henry. He was her constant theme. Wherever her tales began, they always ended in the praises of Henry Graham. She told me a hundred anecdotes to illustrate his contempt of danger, his scorn of effeminacy, his condescension and liberality ; and twice as many which illustrated nothing but her enthusiasm upon the subject. Her enthusiasm had, indeed, warmth and nature enough to be contagious. Henry Graham soon ceased to be a mere stranger to me. I listened to her tales till I knew how to picture his air and gestures,—till I learned to anticipate his conduct like that of an old acquaintance ; and till Cecil herself was not more prepared than I, to expect from him every thing noble, resolute, and kind.

To her inexpressible sorrow, however, this idol of her fancy was only an occasional visitor in Glen Eredine, for which misfortune she accounted as follows :

“ It will be twenty years at Michaelmas, since some of that Clan Alpine, who, by your leave, were never what they should

be, came and lifted the cattle of Glen Eredine ; and no less would serve them but they took Lady Eredine's *oun* cow, that was called Lady Eredine after the lady's *oun* sel'. Well ! you may judge, lady, if Eredine was the man to let them keep *that* with peace and pleasure. Good troth, the laird swore that he would have them all back, hoof and horn, if there was a stout heart in Glen Eredine. Mr Kenneth was in the town then at his learning ; more was the pity—but it was not his fault that he was not there to fight for's *oun*. So the laird would ha' won the beasts home himsel', and that would *he*. But Mr Henry was just set upon going, and he begged so long and so sore, that the laird just let him take's will. Donald MacIan minds it all, for he was standing next the laird's own chair when he laid's hand upon Mr Henry's head, and says he, ' Boy,' says he, ' I am sure you'll never shame Glen Eredine and come back empty-handed.' And then his honour gave a bit nod with's head to Donald, as much as bid him be near Mr Henry ; and Donald told me his heart grew

great, and it was no gi'en him to say one word ; but thinks he, ' I shall be *cutted* in inches before he miss me away from him.'

" So ye see, there were none went but Donald and three more, for Mr Henry said that he would make no more dispeace than enough ; so much forethought had he, although he was but, I may say, a child ; and Donald told me that he followed these cattle by the lay of the heather, just as if he had been thirty years of age ; for the eagle has not an eye like his ; ay, and he travel-
led the whole day without so much as stop-
ping to break bread, although you may well think, lady, that, in those days, his teeth were longer than's beard. And at night he rolled him in's plaid, and laid him down with the rest, as many other good gentles have done before, when we had no inns, nor coaches, nor such like niceties.

" Well ! in the morning he's astir before the roes ; and, with grey light, the first sight he sees coming down Benoghrie is the Glen Eredine cattle, and Lady Eredine the fore-
most. And there was Neil Roy Vich Ro-

ban, and Callum Dubh, and five or six others little worth, with your leave ; and Donald knew not how many more might be in the shealing. Ill days were then ; for the red soldiers were come in long before that, and they had taken away both dirk and gun ; ay, and the very claymore that Ronald Graham wagged in's hand o'er Colin Campbell's neck, was taken and a'. So he that was born to as many good swords, and targes, and dirks, as would have busked all Glen Eredine, had no a weapon to lift but what grew on's *oun* hazels ! But the Grahams, lady, will grip to their foe when the death-stound's in their fingers. So Mr Henry he stood foremost, as was well his due, and he bade Neil Roy to give up these beasts with peace. Well ! what think you lady, the fellow, with your leave, had the face to tell the laird's son that he had ta'en, and he would keep. ' If you can,' quo' Mr Henry, ' with your eight men against five.' Then Neil he swore that the like should never be said of him, and he bade Mr Henry choose any five of his company to fight the Glen Ere-

dine men. ‘A bargain !’ says Mr Henry, ‘so Neil I choose you, and shame befa’ the Graham that takes no the stoutest foe he finds.’ Och on ! lady, if you did but hear Donald tell of that fight. It would make your very skin creep cold. Well, Mr Henry he held off himsel’ so well that Neil at the length flew up in a rage, and out with’s dirk to stick her in our sweet lamb’s heart, but she was guided to light in’s arm. Then Donald he got sight of the blood, and he to Neil like a hawk on a muir-hen, and gripped him with both’s hands round the throat, and held him there till the dirk fell out of’s fingers ; and all the time Callum Dubh was threshing at Donald as had he been corn, but Donald never heeded. Then Mr Henry was so good that he ordered to let Neil go, and helped him up with’s *oun* hand ; but he flung the dirk as far as he could look at her.

“ Well ! by this time two of the Macgriegors had their backs to the earth, so the Glen Eredine men that had settled them, shouted and hurra’d, and away to the cattle. And one cried Lady Eredine, and

the other cried Dubh-bhoidheach, * and the poor beasts knew their voices and came to them. But Mr Henry caused save Janet Donelach's cows first, because she was a widow, and had four young mouths to fill. Be's will, one way or other, they took the cattle, as the laird had said, hoof and horn ; and the Aberfoyle men durst not lift a hand to hinder them, because Neil had bound himsel' under promise, that none but five should meddle."

" But Cecil," interrupted I, growing weary of this rude story, " what has all this to do with Henry Graham's exile from Glen Eredine ?"

" Yes, lady," answered Cecil, " it has to do, for it was the very thing that parted him from's own. For you see the Southron sheriffs were set up before that time, and the laird himsel' could not get's will of any body, as he had a good right ; for they must meddle, with your leave, in every thing. The thistle's beard must na' flee by, but they must catch and look into.

* Black beauty—pronounced tu voiach.

So when the sheriff heard of the Glen Ere-dine spraith, he sent out the red soldiers and took Neil Roy, and Callum Dubh, and prisoned them in Stirling Castle ; and the word went that they were to be hanged, with your leave, if witness could be had against them ; and Donald, and the rest of them that fought the Aberfoyle men, were bidden come and swear again' them. Then the word gaed that the sheriff would have Mr Henry too ; but Lady Ere-dine being a Southron herself, with your leave, was always wishing to send Mr Henry to the strangers, so now she harped upon the laird till he just let her take her will.

“ So, rather than spill man's life, Mr Henry left both friend and foster-brother, and them that could have kissed the ground he trode upon. Och hone ! Either I mind that day, or else I have been well told of ; for it comes like a dream to me, how my mother took me up in her arms, and followed him down the glen. Young and old were there ; and the piper he went foremost, playing the lament. Not one spake above their breath. My mother wouldno'

make up to bid farewell, but when she had gone till she was no' able for more, she stood and looked, and sent her blessing with him ; wishing him well back, and soon. But the babies that were in arms that day ran miles to meet him the next time he saw Glen Eredine."

" And what became of the two prisoners ?" I inquired at the close of this long story.

" 'Deed lady,' replied Cecil, " they were just forced to let them out again ; for two of our lads hid themselves not to bear witness ; and as for Donald MacIan and Duncan Bane, they answered so wisely that nobody could make mischief of what they said. So Neil, that very night he was let out, he lifted four of the sheriff's cows, just for a warning to him ; and drove them to Glen Eredine, in a compliment to Mr Henry."

This tale, and twenty others of the same sort, while they strengthened my interest in Cecil's hero, awakened some curiosity to witness the singular manners which they described. I was not aware how much

the innovations and oppressions of twenty years had defaced the bold peculiarities of Highland character ; how, stripped of their national garb, deprived of the weapons which were at once their ornament, amusement, and defence, this hardy race had bent beneath their fate, seeking safety in evasion, and power in deceit. Nor did I at all suspect how much my ignorance of their language disqualifed me from observing their remaining characteristics.

But curiosity is seldom very troublesome to the poor ; and the vulgar fear of want was soon strong enough to divert my interest from all that Cecil could tell me of the romantic barbarisms of her countrymen, or of the bright eye, the manly port, the primitive hardihood, and the considerate benevolence of Henry Graham.

I was soon obliged to apply to her for information of a different kind. My wretched fund was absolutely exhausted, and still no prospect opened of employment in any form. Having no longer the means of procuring a decent shelter, I seemed inevitably doomed to be destitute and homeless.

One resource indeed remained to me in the plain but decent wardrobe which I had brought to Scotland. It is true, this could furnish only a short-lived abundance, since principle, no less than convenience, had prescribed to me frugality in my attire; but our ideas accommodate themselves to our fortunes, and I, who once should have thought myself beggared if reduced to spend L. 500 a-year, now rejoiced over a provision for the wants of one week as over treasure inexhaustible. I found it easier, however, to resolve upon parting with my superfluous apparel than to execute my resolution. Ignorant of the means of transacting this humbling business, I had not the courage to expose my poverty, by asking instructions. I often argued this point with myself, and proved to my own entire conviction, that poverty was no disgrace, since it had been the lot of patriots, endured by sages, and preferred by saints. Nevertheless, it is not to be told with what contrivance I obtained from Cecil the information necessary for my purpose, nor with what cautious concealment I carried

it into effect. Having once however conquered the first difficulties, I went on without hesitation. It was so much more easy to part with a superfluous trifle than to beg the assistance, or sue for the patronage of strangers.

My last resource, however, proved even more transient than I had expected. I soon found it absolutely necessary to bend my spirit to my fortunes, and to begin a personal search for employment. On a stern wintry morning, I set out for this purpose, with that feeling of dreary independence which belongs to those who know that they can claim no favour from any living soul. I applied at every music-shop, and made known my qualifications at every boarding-school I could discover. At some I was called with forward curiosity to exhibit my talent; and the disgust of my forced compliance was heightened by the coarse applause I received. From some I was dismissed with a permission to call again; at others, I was informed that every department of tuition was already overstocked with teachers of preeminent skill.

At last I thought myself most fortunate in obtaining the address of a lady who wanted a governess for six daughters; but having examined me from head to foot, she dismissed me with a declaration, that she saw I would not do. Before I could shut the room door, I heard the word "beauty" uttered with most acrimonious emphasis. The eldest of the young ladies squinted piteously, and the second was marked with the small-pox.

All that I gained by a whole day of wandering was the opportunity of economizing, by remaining abroad till the dinner-hour was past. Heroines of romance often shew a marvellous contempt for the common necessaries of life, from whence I am obliged to infer, that their biographers never knew the real evils of penury. For my part, I must confess, that remembrance of my better days, and prospects of the dreary future, were not the only feelings which drew tears down my cheek, as I cowered over the embers of a fire, almost as low as my fortunes, and almost as cold as my hopes.

We generally make the most accurate es-

timate of ourselves when we are stripped of all the externals which serve to magnify us in our own eyes. I had often confessed, that all my comforts were underserved,—that I escaped every evil only by the mitigation of a righteous sentence; but I had never so truly felt the justice of this confession, as now, when nothing was left me which could, by any latitude of language, be called my own. Yet, though depressed, I was not comfortless; for I knew that my deserts were not the measure of my blessings; and when I remembered that my severest calamities had led to substantial benefit,—that even my presumption and self-will had often been overruled to my advantage,—I felt at once a disposition to distrust my own judgment of present appearances, and an irresistible conviction that, however bereaved, I should not be forsaken. I fear it is not peculiar to me, to reserve a real trust in Providence for the time which offers nothing else to trust. However, I mingled tears with prayers, and doubtful anticipation with acts of confidence, till, my mind as weary as my frame, I found refuge from all my

cares in a sleep more peaceful than had often visited my pillow when every luxury that whim could crave waited my awaking.

I was scarcely dressed next morning, when my landlady bustled into my apartment with an air of great importance. She seated herself with the freedom which she thought my situation entitled her to use, and abruptly inquired, whether I was not seeking employment as a governess? A sense of the helplessness and desolation which I had brought upon myself had so well subdued my spirit, that I answered this unceremonious question only by a meek affirmative. Mrs Milne then, with all the exultation of a patroness, declared, that she would recommend me to an excellent situation; and proceeded to harangue concerning her “willingness to befriend people, because there was no saying how soon she herself might need a friend.” I submitted resignedly enough to the ostentation of vulgar patronage, while Mrs Milne unfolded her plan. Her sister, she told me, was waiting-maid to a lady who wanted a governess for her only child, a girl about ten

years old. She added, that believing me to have come into Scotland with a view to employment of that kind, she had mentioned me to this sister, who, she hinted, had no small influence with her mistress. Finally, she advised me to lose no time in offering my services, because, as Mrs Boswell's plan of education was now full four and twenty hours old, nobody who knew her could expect its continuance, unless circumstances proved peculiarly favourable to its stability.

Though I could not help smiling at my new channel of introduction, I was in no situation to despise any prospect of employment; and I immediately proceeded to inquire into the particulars of the offered situation, and into my chance of obtaining it. I was informed, that Mr Boswell, having, in the course of a long residence in one of the African settlements, realized a competent fortune, had returned home to spend it among his relations; that he was a good-natured easy man, who kept a handsome establishment, loved quiet, a good dinner, and a large allowance of claret; that in the first of these

luxuries he was rather sparingly indulged by his lady, who nevertheless was a very endurable sort of person to those who could suit themselves to her way. These, however, were so few, that but for one or two persons made obsequious by necessity, the Boswells would have eaten their ragouts and drunk their claret alone.

All this was not very encouraging ; but it was not for me to startle at trifles, and I only expressed my fears, that the recommendation of the waiting-maid might not be thought quite sufficient to procure for me such a trust as the education of an only child. " Oh ! for that matter," said my landlady, " if you put yourself in luck's way, you have as good a chance as another, for Mrs. Boswell will never fash to look after ony but them that looks after her."

Agreeably to this opinion, I had no sooner swallowed my spare breakfast, than I walked to George Square, to present myself to Mrs. Boswell. I was informed at her door, that she was in bed, but that if I returned about one o'clock, I should probably

find her stirring. At the hour appointed, I returned accordingly ; and, after some demur and consultation between the footman and the house-maid, I was shewn into a handsome breakfast-parlour, where, upon a fashionable couch, half sat, half lay, Mrs Boswell.

Her thin sharp face, high nose, and dark eyes, gave her at the first glance, an air of intelligence ; but when I looked again, her curveless mouth, her wandering eye-brows, and low contracted forehead, obliged me to form a different judgment. The last impression was probably heightened by the employment in which I found her engaged. From a large box of trinkets which stood before her, she was bedizening herself and a pretty little fair-haired girl with every possible variety of bauble. Each was decked with at least half a dozen necklaces, studded all over with *mal-à-propos* clasps and broaches, and shackled with a multitude of rings and bracelets, so that they looked like two princesses of the South Sea Islands. All this was surveyed with such gravity and self-importance, as shewed that

the elder baby had her full share in the amusement.

Mrs Boswell did not rise to receive me ; but she stirred, which was a great deal for Mrs Boswell. I made my obeisance with no very good will, and told her, that hearing she wanted a governess for Miss Boswell, I had taken the liberty to wait upon her.

Mrs Boswell only answered me by something which she intended for a smile. Most smiles express either benevolence or gaiety ; but Mrs Boswell's did neither. It was a mere extension of the mouth ; she never used any other. " My pretty love," said she, addressing herself to the child, " will you go and tell Campbell to find my —a—my musk-box, and you can help her to seek it, you know."

" No ! I won't," bawled the child, " for I know you only want to send me away that you may talk to the lady about that nasty governess."

" I a'nt going to talk about any nasty governess. Do go now, there's a dear, and I'll take you out in the carriage, and buy

you another new doll,—a large one with blue eyes.”

“ No you won’t,” retorted Miss, “ for you promised me the doll if I would learn to write o, and you did not give it me then; no more will you now.”

“ A pretty ground-work for my labours!” thought I.

The altercation was carried on long and briskly, mingled with occasional appeals to me. “ Miss Percy, did you ever see such a child?”

“ Oh yes, Madam,—a great many such.”

“ She has, to be sure, such an unmanageable temper. But then,” (in a half whisper,) “ the wonderfulest clever little creature! Now do, Jessie, go out of the room when you are bid.”

At last, command and stratagem being found equally unavailing, Mrs Boswell was obliged to take the course which many people would have preferred from the first; and proceeded to her business in spite of the presence of Miss Jessie.

“ Can you teach the *piano*?”

“ I believe I understand music tolerably

well ; and though I am a very inexperienced teacher, I would endeavour to show no want of patience or assiduity."

" And singing ?" said Mrs Boswell, yawning.

" I have been taught to sing."

" And French, and geography, and all the rest of it ?"

I was spared the difficulty of answering this comprehensive question by my pupil elect, who by this time had sidled close up to me, and was looking intently in my face. " You a'nt the governess your own self ? Are you ?" said she.

" I hope I shall be so my dear."

" I thought you had been an ugly cross old thing ! You a'nt cross. Are you ?"

" No. I do not think I am."

" I dare say you are very funny and good-natured."

Mrs Boswell gave me a glance which she intended should express sly satisfaction. " You would like to *larn* music and every thing of that pretty lady, would'n't you ?" said she to her daughter.

" No. I would never like to *larn* nothing

at all ; but I should like her to stay with me, if she would play with me, and never bother me with that nasty spelling-book."

" Well, she sha'n't bother you. Miss Percy, what terms do you expect?"

" These I leave entirely to you and Mr Boswell, Madam. Respectable protection is the more important consideration with me."

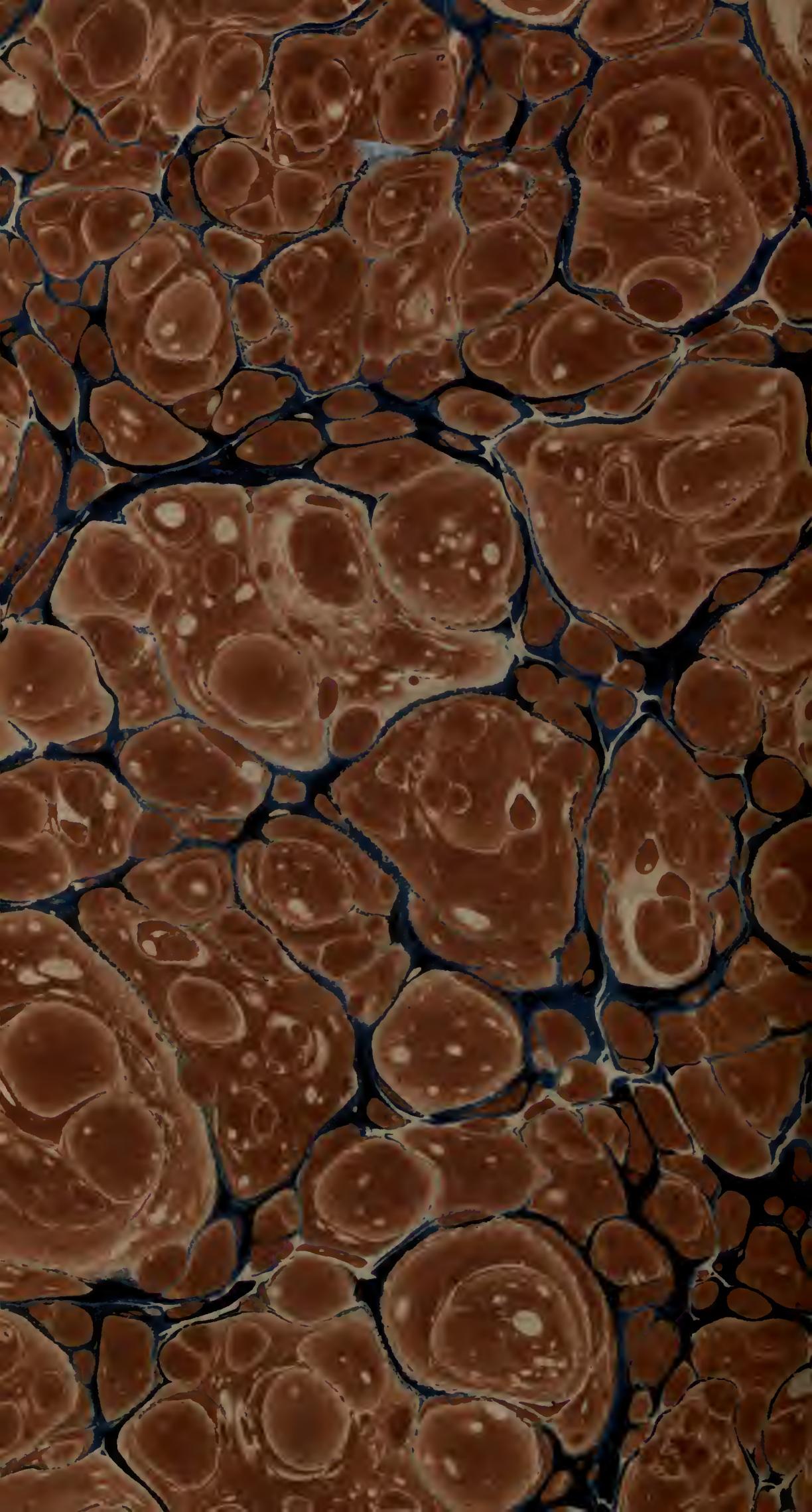
" To be sure protection is very important," said Mrs Boswell, once more elongating her mouth ; and she made a pause of at least five minutes to recruit after such an unusual expence of idea. This time I employed in making my court so effectually to the young lady, that when her mother at last mentioned the time of my removal to George Square, she became clamorous for my returning that evening. A new set of stratagems was now vainly tried to quiet my obstreperous inviter ; and then mamma, as usual, gave up the point. " Pray come to-night if you can," said she, " or there will be no peace."

END OF VOL. II.

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